

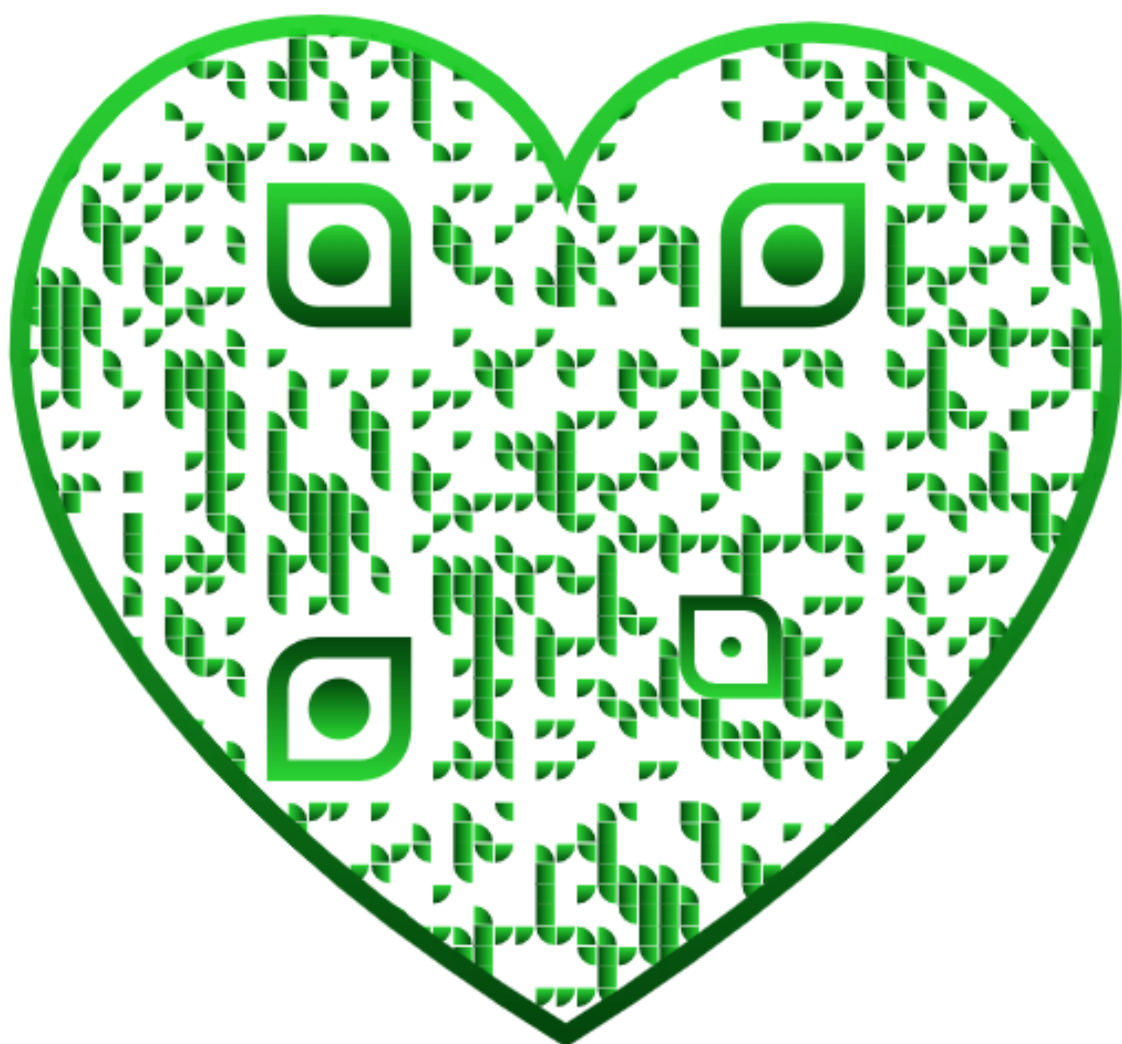
KATE BUSH GUNS N' ROSES MEGADETH
HOW RUNNING UP THAT HILL MADE HER A STAR, TWICE RETURN TO THE UK, FINALLY! DAVE MUSTAINE: THE CLASSIC ROCK INTERVIEW

★ CLASSIC ★ Rock

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us somewhat new
as a band"*

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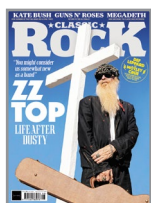


Okay, I fear I'm tempting fate if I write this, but to hell with it. It finally feels like we're coming out the other side of the pandemic, doesn't it? I mean, I've been to more gigs in the past fortnight than I have in the last two years. Just one glance at this issue's gig reviews section is testament to the definite rebirth of the live scene. Download was back to full strength (see p94), Muse rocked Rock In Rio in Lisbon (p101) – yeah, that confuses me too – Guns N' Roses returned to the UK (p102), as did Rammstein (p105) and many more. Across the pond Def Leppard and Mötley Crüe finally began their much-postponed The Stadium Tour (we have exclusive photos and a chat with Joe Elliott on p8). It definitely feels like the tide is turning.

Talking of bands out on the road, for this issue's main event we catch up with the inestimable Billy Gibbons to talk about what the future holds for ZZ Top after losing the iconic Dusty Hill. And one thing's for sure: there's just no stopping the Top.

Finally, and still keeping to the live theme, recently in our letters page (p62) we've been discussing the value of the small venue. Do you have a local pub/club that's doing its damndest to support the live scene? Let us know about it – or about anything else, for that matter – by dropping us a note at classicrock@futurenet.com.

Until next month...



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ROSS HALFIN

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Editor

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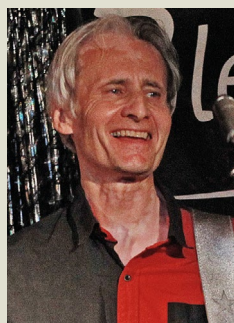
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This month's contributors



DAVID SINCLAIR

In this issue musician and writer David catches up with Billy Gibbons for our cover story to discover what life after losing Dusty Hill entails for the mighty ZZ Top (p26). David's new single with the David Sinclair Four, *Won't Be Divided* b/w *Bye Bye Johnny*, is released on Critical Discs/Proper. Find out live dates and more at www.davidsinclairfour.com



ALEX BURROWS

Former *Classic Rock* managing editor and longtime contributor/friend of the Louder team Alex immersed himself in Siouxsie And The Banshees' back catalogue for this month's Buyer's Guide (p80). By day he's Operations Manager at Twin V, the creators of Space Rocks, Iron Maiden's fan club mag, the World Metal Congress and much more.



PAUL BRANNIGAN

Paul Brannigan has been chatting with rock stars for over a quarter of a century. This month we sent him to hang out with The Gaslight Anthem's Brian Fallon to discuss the New Jersey band's imminent reunion and UK tour (p44). Paul's latest book, *Eruption: The Eddie Van Halen Story*, is published by Faber and is out now. It will soon be available in paperback.



5150

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Paul Henderson
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Online Editor
Fraser Lewry
Ultimate Thunder, Ultimate Thunder

News/Lives Editor
Dave Ling
Cats In Space, Kickstart The Sun

Contributing writers

Marcel Anders, Geoff Barton, Tim Batcup, Mark Beaumont, Max Bell, Essi Berelian, Simon Bradley, Rich Chamberlain, Stephen Dalton, Rich Davenport, Johnny Dee, Bill DeMain, Lee Dorrian, Mark Ellen, Claudia Elliott, Paul Elliott, Dave Everley, Jerry Ewing, Hugh Fielder, Eleanor Goodman, Gary Graff, Michael Hann, John Harris, Nick Hasted, Rich Hobson, Barney Hoskyns, Jon Hotten, Rob Hughes, Neil Jeffries, Emma Johnston, Jo Kendall, Hannah May Kilroy, Dom Lawson, Dannii Leivers, Chris Lord, Ken McIntyre, Lee Marlow, Alexander Milas, Paul Moody, Grant Moon, Kris Needs, Bill Nelson, Paul Rees, Chris Roberts, David Quantick, Will Simpson, Johnny Sharp, David Sinclair, Sleazegrinder, David Stubbs, Everett True, Jaan Uhelszki, Mick Wall, Paddy Wells, Philip Wilding, Henry Yates

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Future PLC Quay House, The Ambury, Bath BA1 1UA

Editorial

Editor **Siân Llewellyn**
Art Editor **Darrell Mayhew**
Features Editor **Polly Glass**
Production Editor **Paul Henderson**
Reviews Editor **Ian Fortnam**
News/Lives Editor **Dave Ling**
Online Editor **Fraser Lewry**
Content Director (Music) **Scott Rowley**
Head Of Design (Music) **Brad Merrett**

Advertising

Media packs are available on request
Commercial Director **Clare Dove**
clare.dove@futurenet.com
Advertising Manager **Helen Hughes**
helen.hughes@futurenet.com
Account Director **Ayomide Magbagbeola**
ayomide.magbagbeola@futurenet.com
Account Director **Steven Pyatt**
steven.pyatt@futurenet.com

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Management

Managing Director, Music **Stuart Williams**



Classic Rock, Future, 121-141 Westbourne Terrace, London, UK, W2 6JR
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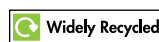
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Def Leppard with
Nikki Sixx.



"Ouch!" Tommy Lee is not in
the best shape for a tour.





Peace from a happy-looking Mick Mars.

LEPPARD/CRÜE TOUR HITS THE ROAD. FINALLY!

Joe Elliott reveals how Def Leppard and Mötley Crüe defied broken ribs, rain and humidity to launch the much-delayed The Stadium Tour of North America.

Photos: **Ross Halfin**



Vince Neil has received flak for some of his vocal performances.

TWICE DELAYED DUE to covid-19 and two years later than planned, The Stadium Tour – featuring co-headliners Def Leppard and Mötley Crüe, plus Poison and Joan Jett & The Blackhearts – finally got under way at Truist Park in Atlanta, Georgia on June 16. It didn't take long for the tour, which comes to Europe next summer, to produce the drama that had always seemed inevitable.

The opening night made instant headlines around the world when Crüe drummer Tommy Lee left the stage in agony after just five songs, handing his sticks to Tommy Clufetos for the rest of the set.

Former Black Sabbath, Alice Cooper and Ted Nugent man Clufetos had been waiting in the wings after Lee, on the tour against medical advice, broke four ribs before it commenced. "I wish I had a cool story for you, [but] I won't say how [it happened] because it's fuckin' bullshit," Lee later commented from the stage.

Def Leppard frontman Joe Elliott says that, like just about everybody behind the scenes, he'd had no idea of Lee's injury until show time.

"I had seen Tommy on the final day of production rehearsals towards the end of May, and of course I gave him a big hug – ouch," the singer says, wincing. "I'm told it was a completely sober accident, but I really don't know the facts."

Befitting Lee's image as a tough guy, each night he plays as many songs as the pain will allow. "Tommy is a beast – he's phenomenal," Elliott exclaims. "Each time his face comes up on the big video screens he gets a huge cheer from the fans."

"The other Tommy [Clufetos], or Tommy 2.0 as he's called on the tour, is also a beast. Let's face it, we're all getting older," Joe adds, smiling. "It won't be long before everybody has somebody in the wings waiting to come on. Bands are going to be like football teams."

Later that same opening night in Atlanta, Leppard's own set was plagued by torrential rain. "You probably saw the photos," Elliott relates. "But we went out on to the ramps, nobody hid from the weather. With radio mics you can't get electrocuted, the worst that can happen is that you get struck by lightning – and there was plenty of that. But luckily it didn't happen."

"The next day our guitars were all leaned up against walls and revived by numerous hairdryers," he continues. "Being out there was like standing under a shower. But we're like the Black Knight from *Monty Python* – we've lost a limb, we've lost a life and we've survived cancer, so when it came to our first gig in two and a half years we weren't going

to be beaten by a little bit of water. On the second night, in Miami, it didn't rain, but my god it was so humid, the guys couldn't even keep their fingers on the strings," he says.

Classic Rock spoke to Elliott three dates into the tour. The day after, on the trek's fourth date, in

Washington DC, it was Mötley Crüe's turn to be hit by a torrential downpour that delayed the start of their set by 90 minutes.

A clear pattern is emerging: The Stadium Tour will not be plain sailing. But after the false starts, Elliott is overjoyed to be out there and gigging again.

"It's been such a bloody long time. You've got to understand that this was all being planned for a year before it was even announced," he states, almost disbelievably. "Everything was in the making before we finished our last tour, which ended in Nashville in November 2019."

Rather than force their newly released album *Diamond Star Halos* down the throats of the audience, Leppard are playing just four of its songs, opening a 'greatest hits'-based set with a one-two of *Take What You Want* and ➤

"Both camps want it to be a great event, and so far it's working."

Joe Elliott



Joe Elliott has a kick-about.



THE STADIUM TOUR HEADS TO THE UK IN 2023

Plans are being finalised to bring the bill of The Stadium Tour to the UK next summer.

"I can't reveal when or where it will happen, because I haven't been told that it's okay to say anything yet, but the second that information is cleared *Classic Rock* will know about it," Joe Elliott tells us.

"One gig is absolutely confirmed so far, and we're looking at a second one in a different city. There will be another in Dublin, and loads around Europe. Some of them will just be festivals [with different bands], but others will be what we're currently doing here in North America."

More news when we get it.

Fire It Up, and later on *Kick* and *This Guitar*. Audiences have been "going completely wild," says Elliott.

During the build up to the tour, Crüe frontman Vince Neil received a lot of flak for poor vocal performances and being out of shape. Elliott, having watched side-stage on the first night of the tour, says Neil's voice was "swathed in a cacophony of echo." "I was stood in the wrong place to comment, but he sounded like Vince," he adds. "He wasn't singing flat or sharp. It was a little thin-sounding, but it always was. I haven't seen much negativity about his performances."

So how is the headliner for each city decided upon?

"Toss of a coin, probably," he says with a laugh. "It's all negotiated by management. We gave them Los Angeles, their home town, they gave us New York. Seattle is the home town of Nikki [Sixx, bassist]. There are thirty-six stadiums. As long as we headline eighteen each what does it fucking matter? In the age of streaming [a band's popularity geographically] is not based on guesswork any more, and if that information is available then why not use it?"

Nobody is saying too much about Poison, one of the other bands on the bill. Are they putting on good performances?

"Apparently so, though I've yet to see them," Elliott replies. "Bret Michaels is a brilliant ringleader, he's not out there to be Paul Rodgers, and his band are a real bunch of merry men. They haven't had a record out in decades, so they just play the hits, of which they have plenty, and the crowds love them."

What about Joan Jett, who's the opener of the four bands on the bill. How is she faring?

"Listen, Joan is a monster," he enthuses. "Her set is an hour long and there isn't a song you've never heard before. She's got such a great band."

Before the arrival of the four main attractions, Classless Act open each show with a very brief show. The Los Angeles band recently released a self-titled song, which features a cameo from Vince Neil.

"Those guys go on just for around fifteen minutes, to let everybody in the car parks know that the show is beginning," Elliott explains. "The stadiums fill up really quickly. By the time Joan went on in Atlanta there were twenty-two thousand people in already."

Finally, if Elliott was a betting man would he put good money on Mötley Crüe completing the tour, its last date

being on September 9?

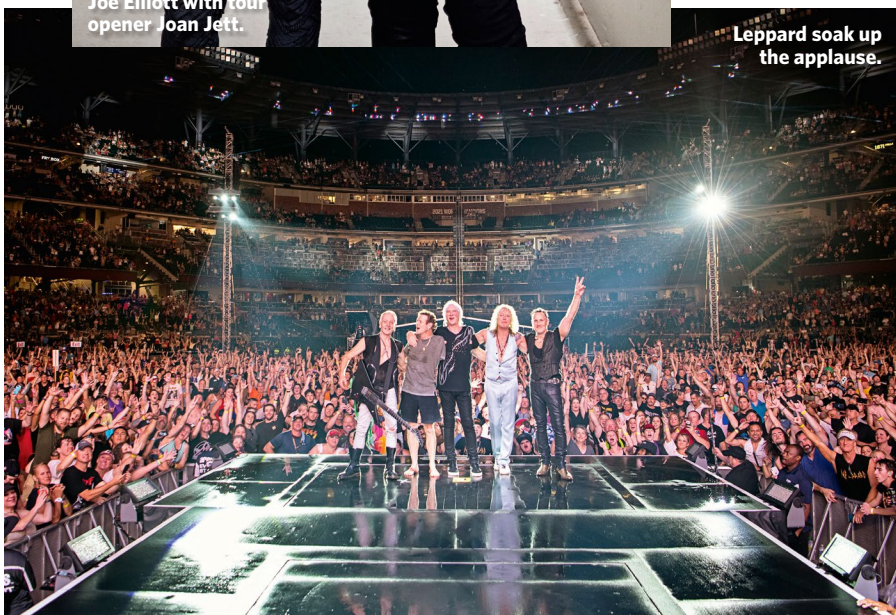
"Of course he will," he says firmly. "Mötley Crüe are not a bunch of wusses who just give up and go home at the first sign of trouble. They embrace the madness. I can't see anything stopping them. It's only 36 shows. On our *Adrenalize* tour, we did 241 shows, and on *Hysteria* we did 227. Unless you're incapacitated beyond any reasonable level, there's no way any band shouldn't be able to manage that. I talk to Nikki on a daily basis, and there's a shared responsibility to make this work. Both camps want it to be a great event, and so far it's working." **DL**



Joe Elliott with tour opener Joan Jett.



Nikki Sixx



Leppard soak up the applause.



Phil Collen enjoys a bit of down time.



Tommy Lee with his sometime stand-in Tommy Clufetos.



RIP

Thank you...
and good night.

Jim Seals

October 17, 1942 – June 6, 2022

One half of the 1970s soft-rock duo Seals & Crofts, Jim Seals has died at the age of 79. The Texan-born pair's biggest hit was *Summer Breeze*, released in 1972. He and his brother Dan – the Dan in England Dan & John Ford Coley – often played together as Seals & Seals. John Ford Coley described Jim Seal as “a bona fide, dyed-in-the-wool musical genius”.

Ken Kelly

May 19, 1946 – June 3, 2022

Renowned for his sword-and-sorcery-themed artwork, Ken Kelly's paintings graced some of the most famous rock records of all time, including *Destroyer* and *Love Gun* by Kiss, Rainbow's *Rising* and six Manowar albums. Paul Stanley said: “Ken Kelly's fantasy art captured the larger-than-life image of Kiss perfectly.” Kelly was 76. No cause of death has been announced.

Massimo Morante

October 6, 1952 – June 23, 2022

Massimo Morante, a guitarist with Italian progressive rock band Goblin, has died at the age of 69. Between 1975 and '78, Goblin were extremely successful, working with Dario Argento on the soundtrack to the 1977 horror film *Suspiria* and George A Romero's *Dawn Of The Dead*. Director John Carpenter once admitted that Goblin's ground-breaking work on *Suspiria* inspired the score for his own film *Halloween*.

Cathal Coughlan

December 16, 1960 – May 18, 2022

Cathal Coughlan, the frontman with the Irish indie bands Microdisney and Fatima Mansions has, in the words of his family, “slipped away peacefully in hospital after a long illness” at the age of 61. Coughlan, who employed an endearingly confrontational style of writing, had suffered from mental illness over the past few years. “His brilliant songs remain,” said Charlatans frontman Tim Burgess. “Play them loud and remember him.”

Kenny Cox

January 10, 1952 – June 21, 2022

Although details are scarce, former Gillan bassist John McCoy has revealed that Kenny Cox, his bandmate in Mammoth, has passed away at 70. Guitarist Cox had been a member of NWOBHM band More, who appeared at Monsters Of Rock in 1981 and released two albums for Atlantic Records. Mammoth, completed by singer Nicky Moore and guitarist ‘Big’ Mac Baker – who made headlines for their huge combined weight – recorded two albums.



Alec John Such

November 14, 1951 – June 5, 2022

BON JOVI ARE mourning their co-founding former bassist, who has died of unknown cause at the age of 70. In a statement Jon Bon Jovi said the group were “heartbroken” over the loss, declaring: “Alec was integral to the formation of the band. We found our way to each other through Alec – he was a childhood friend of Tico [Torres, drums] and brought Richie [Sambora, guitarist] to see us perform. Alec was always wild and full of life. Today these special memories bring a smile to my face and a tear to my eye. We will miss him dearly.”

Born in Yonkers, New York in 1951, Such had helped Jon Bon Jovi assemble a backing group to capitalise on the local-radio success of a demo the singer had recorded of the song *Runaway*. Such played on Bon Jovi's first five albums – *Bon Jovi*, *7800° Fahrenheit*, *Slippery When Wet*, *New Jersey* and *Keep The Faith* – but he was ‘let go’ before the release of a sixth, *These Days*, in 1995. At the time, Bon Jovi

were reticent to reveal the reasons, although the dismissal came after the bassist gave a controversial interview in which he claimed that the band treated him “as an afterthought”, that he had “lied” for Jon Bon Jovi, and that “Jon tells me I suck [as a player] all the time”.

After being replaced by Hugh McDonald, Such dropped off the music radar and opened a motorcycle store in New York, but then returned briefly to Bon Jovi twice: in 2001 he joined them on stage at Giants Stadium in New Jersey, and in 2018 all five members of the founding line-up – including Sambora, who left the band in 2013 – united on stage to play three songs when Bon Jovi were inducted into the Rock Hall Of Fame.

Derek Shulman, who signed Bon Jovi to PolyGram in 1983, said: “Alec had great stage presence and was always a fun and energetic force in the earliest days. He will be dearly missed.” **FL/DL**

Brett Tuggle

September 23, 1951 – June 19, 2022

DAVID COVERDALE AND Rick Springfield were among those to pay tribute to Brett Tuggle, best known as a member of David Lee Roth's live band and a touring musician with Fleetwood Mac, after the 70-year-old succumbed to complications related to cancer. Coverdale, who worked with Tuggle as part of Coverdale-Page, said he was “a delightful man”, while Springfield, who hired the keyboard player in '82, Tweeted: “Our sweet Brett Tuggle made it home tonight. God bless his beautiful spirit.”

Colorado-born Tuggle found an early break with Mitch Ryder And The Detroit Wheels, playing on their album *Detroit*. His next stop was with John Kay & Steppenwolf in '81. He then hooked up with Springfield when the singer hit the big time with *Jessie's Girl*. With Dave Lee Roth Tuggle played on the world tour for the *Eat 'Em And Smile* album, and with Roth wrote *Just Like Paradise*, a hit single from follow-up, *Skyscraper*. Tuggle remained with the singer until 1994.

After meeting Mick Fleetwood, he played keyboards for the drummer's side-project The Zoo. It wasn't long before Tuggle became a part of the Fleetwood Mac family, playing with them on every tour from 1997 to 2017, and also gigging with Stevie Nicks, Lindsey Buckingham and Buckingham McVie.

Bassist Billy Sheehan, who played with Tuggle in Roth's group, said Tuggle was “the ‘secret weapon’ of the *Eat 'Em And Smile* band and tour, loved by everyone that ever met



him, and gifted with supreme talent”, while Steve Vai, who was also in Roth's band at that time, described him as “one of the finest people I have ever met”.

Tuggle also played with Steven Tyler, Styx guitarist Tommy Shaw, and Belinda Carlisle among others. **DL**

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More Names For Taylor Hawkins Tribute

John Paul Jones and Krist Novoselic added to the bill.

JOHN PAUL JONES, Nile Rodgers, former Nirvana bassist Krist Novoselic and Heart guitarist Nancy Wilson are among the latest additions to the bill of the Taylor Hawkins tribute concert in London, which takes place at Wembley Stadium on September 3. They join the already announced Brian May and Roger Taylor of Queen, ex-Rush pair Geddy Lee and Alex Lifeson, Liam Gallagher, Stewart Copeland, Supergrass and headliners the Foo Fighters.

A sister event in Los Angeles is set to include John Paul Jones, Nancy Wilson, Krist Novoselic, P!NK and LeAnn Rimes in addition to the previously announced Gene Simmons, Nikki Sixx, Miley Cyrus, Red Hot Chili Peppers drummer Chad Smith, RATM drummer Brad Wilk, Joan Jett, Alanis Morissette and The Struts frontman Luke Spiller.

Proceeds from the ticket sales from both shows will benefit charities in the US and UK as chosen by Hawkins's family. **DL**



Stars Slam USA Abortion Ruling

Outrage at the Supreme Court's decision.

FLEETWOOD MAC VOCALIST Stevie Nicks is among those who have voiced outrage after the United States Supreme Court overturned a law – in a case known as *Roe vs Wade* – that gave women the right to have an abortion.

"I would like for everyone to watch the documentary called *The Janes*," Nicks said via social media. "I watched it tonight. It is a huge déjà vu for me, as it is about my generation leading up to *Roe vs Wade*. Please watch it. It will blow your mind."

Garbage's Shirley Manson called on the US to "Abort the Supreme Court!"

"We have turned the clock back decades for women," stated Queensrÿche frontman Todd La Torre.

"It still feels impossible to comprehend that we live in a country divided on basic human rights, namely healthcare and women's reproductive rights," said Hayley Williams of Paramore.

Outspoken former Twisted Sister frontman Dee Snider raged: "Rise up and vote those mutha-effers out!" **DL**

NEWS

Iron Maiden are to pay the remaining medical bills for their former frontman **Paul Di'Anno**, who continues to undergo extensive knee surgery in Croatia. Although confined to a wheelchair, Di'Anno recently played his first full solo concert in seven years, in Zagreb.

A posthumous solo album from the late Big Big Train singer **David Longdon** is scheduled for release. *Door One* is available on October 14 via English Electric Recordings. BBT's new lead singer is Italian Alberto Bravin.

Queensrÿche release their sixteenth studio album on October 7. *Digital Noise Alliance* is the band's fourth album with Todd La Torre on vocals.

Alice Cooper relishes the idea that hard rock is no longer the commercial force it once was. "I think it's kind of healthy that rock bands now are not number one, number two or number three," Cooper commented in an interview with *LA Weekly*. "We're back to the point of being rebels again."



Asked why he reportedly turned down an offer to appear in *Game Of Thrones*, **Robert Plant** (pictured) referred to the warrior-like imagery behind Led Zeppelin's *Immigrant Song*, and replied: "I started that shit!" Pressed on the question, Plant insisted: "I don't want to be typecast."



WELCOME BACK Dawes

Taylor Goldsmith on digging jazz, doing things on his own terms, and Dylan confusing him with Taylor Swift.

"I'D PROBABLY BE a better lead singer of a rock band if I could stop smiling so much on stage," jokes Taylor Goldsmith. This summer, you can't blame the affable Dawes frontman for smiling. He and his wife Mandy Moore are expecting their second child, and he'll be touring behind Dawes's eighth album, *Misadventures Of Doomscroller*. While more adventurously proggy than their previous records, it still carries what Goldsmith calls the "Dawes DNA" – a guitar-driven California breeze threaded through philosophical lyrics.

We caught up with him to chat about everything from progressive jazz to fatherhood.

What was your vision for the new record?

On our last album the songs were three minutes long. Tight, clear and concise – all the usual boxes checked. This time I thought I'm done checking those boxes. I don't really care about short attention spans or how long a song is.

Were there inspirations behind this new approach?

I got obsessed with *Speak No Evil* by [jazz saxophonist] Wayne Shorter. While we were recording these rock songs, I was immersed in jazzier things – Miles [Davis] and Herbie [Hancock]. All these records that really take their time. Pink Floyd too. When *Shine On You Crazy Diamond* goes around to the third solo before the vocal even starts, you know these guys are doing it on their terms. We thought: "Let's make that our guiding principle."

Did having your first child affect your outlook in some ways?

A friend who's a new dad said: "It doesn't change what's important, it changes *why* it's important." I still plan on making records and performing, but before, I was hung up

on some sixteen-year-old's sense of legacy. To some extent, if you believe you have something to say in front of ten thousand people, you have a certain amount of narcissism [laughs]. But now, with my son in the world, it's paramount that he grows up seeing that his dad did what he wanted on his terms.

When Dawes toured with Bob Dylan did you and he ever talk shop?

He doesn't hang with openers, but I met him on the last day. He said: "Hey, great

having you guys.

What's the name of that last ballad you played?" I told him, and he said: "Great song." I freaked out and tried to shake his hand. He said: "Why don't we just fist bump?" Later, he did an interview

and was asked about the *Basement Tapes* project with covers [of Dylan songs] by Elvis Costello, Rhiannon Giddens, Taylor Goldsmith... and he said: "Oh, Taylor Swift played my songs?" [laughs].

You were born and raised in LA. Do you still get starstruck?

I think people here can have this attitude of: "I've seen too much and I'm not impressed." But I've never been able to shake the fanboy thing. When Mandy takes me to the Emmys, I'm like: "Look, it's so and so!" [laughs].

What's next for you?

We have another kid coming. I'm psyched for this summer tour. We're co-headlining with The Head And The Heart, and hitting lots of cities where we don't usually go. And I already have fifteen songs written for our next record. It's a totally different sound. **BDM**

Misadventures Of Doomscroller is out now via Rounder Records.

★ HIGH HOPES

Amongst Liars

Against what their name suggests, they've taken it upon themselves to tell a few truths.

SOME PEOPLE WILL tell you that timing is everything. Amongst Liars vocalist Ian George isn't one of them. Having formed in November 2019, just months before lockdown, the Brighton quartet managed to play just one gig – a packed show at Camden Rocks Festival – before everything shut down. "It wasn't the best time to form a band," the singer admits with a self-deprecating laugh. "But we've got this ethic, we just want to write and work."

Amongst Liars have powered through. With gigs off the table, they focused on building their fan base, releasing a steady stream of singles and honing their full-throttle, turbo-charged rock.

"The modern bands doing something we want to tap into are Royal Blood, Bring Me The Horizon, Architects – bands who have got that modern, heavier sound," says George. "When we were writing the album, the big thing for us was defining what we want to sound like and who we want to be."

That self-titled debut album is very much an opening statement. It's riddled with gale-force stompers destined to unite crowds of raised fists, but it also introduces a band who want to be known for having something to say; they tackle environmental fears (*All Over Now*), fake news (*Burn The Vision*) and, on single *Cut It*, the concerning rise in domestic violence

taking place during the pandemic. "We want to discuss the modern world and what's going on around us, but put a positive spin on it," says George. "It's not all just: 'Fuck the Tories'."

That said, the swaggering *Black Days* burns with anti-Conservatism fury. "I work with a lot of disabled people in my day job, and I've known two people who have died as a result of their policies," George continues. "One guy I worked with was cleared of cancer, and they stopped his benefits the day after he was cured. He went into a depression because he couldn't work, his brain tumour came back, and he died three months later. Someone else I knew took their own life. She had cerebral palsy and there were problems getting her funding and grants through. Look what they've done to the country."

Amongst Liars are now taking that energy and anger on the road. In November 2021 their debut tour coincided with Storm Arwen's deadly rampage across the UK. "We came through Birmingham with roofs ripped off houses, then driving across the Pennines between Sheffield to Manchester was snow-laden. We were thinking: 'Are these gigs even going to happen?' But people still came out."

Now, with slots supporting Canada's Theory Of A Deadman and a headline UK tour in the bag, things are finally ramping up.

"We've written fifteen songs for the next album," says George. "I want to blitz it. We have a lot of time to make up for!" **DL**

Amongst Liars is out now via Earache.

FOR FANS OF...



"It was this perfect marriage of groove rock and [Chris] Cornell's voice," Ian George enthuses of Audioslave's inspirational self-titled album. "We wrote one of our songs, *Kill The Tide*, with this big *Cochise* intro and we were like: 'Nah, we can't pull that off.' So we re-did the track. They can get away with it because it's such a banger of a song."



DE DE LIND

Lo Non So Da Dove Vengo E Non So Dove Mai Andrò. Uomo È Il Nome Che Mi Han Dato, Mercury Records, Italy, 1972. £750.



Italian band De De Lind started out as a beat band in the late 60s, and released a string of singles before this progressive monster of an album in 1972. It has one of the

longest album titles in the history of prog (translated into English it reads: 'I don't know where I'm coming from and I don't know where I will go to. Man is the name I was given') and is considered by many aficionados of the Italian scene to be a masterpiece. The musicianship and atmosphere on display are pure class. Dark and aggressive heavy sections are interspersed with melodic folk subtleties and dramatic intentions.

Fuga E More starts with pounding kettle drums, creating moody soundtrack vibes before being struck by doomy chords, topped off by dramatic vocals. *Indietro Nel Tempo* cleverly introduces a recurring

'The musicianship and atmosphere on display are pure class.'

melody which makes the whole album more engaging. Lead guitarist Matteo Vitolli tastefully trades solos with sax and flute, before a haunting harpsichord takes us into the deeper acoustic strains of *Paura Del Niente*. Midway through, the track builds up into a crescendo of manic paced panned drumming and wild soloing, before dropping back down into a sparse flute solo. Side two continues along the same atmospheric terrain, with the heavier parts sounding even heavier.

This album is definitely a deep listen, and one that needs to be heard without distraction to be fully appreciated, which may be a test of patience for some but sheer joy for others. **LD**

NEWS

The long-awaited 2018 remix of **Pink Floyd's** album *Animals* has been cleared for release via Warner Music. It will be available on CD, LP, Blu-ray and SACD with remixed 5.1 surround sound for the first time, and has new album artwork. The individual versions are available on September 16 and the Deluxe edition on October 7.

Whitesnake were forced to cancel the final three dates of their European tour after frontman David Coverdale was diagnosed with a sinus and trachea infection. Prior to that, Steve Vai played with the band at Hellfest in France, on the song *Still Of The Night*.

Tony Wright releases a new solo record, titled *The Anti Album*, on October 7. The Terrorvision frontman will undertake a 17-date British tour that runs from the day of its release until November 6.



Fans of **Peter Gabriel** (pictured) are hoping the singer is on the verge of releasing his first album of new music since 2002's *Up*. Gabriel and his team have been planting subtle hints of a record with the working title *I/O*, which could be out later this year.

Depeche Mode have revealed that the death of their keyboard player Andy Fletcher in May was due to an aortic dissection, a tear in the body's main artery. "Even though it was far, far too soon, Andy passed naturally and without prolonged suffering", they say.



WELCOME BACK

Tim Bowness

One half of No-Man on his new album's guests, mixer pal Steven Wilson and what's happening with their band.

ACCLAIMED UK ARTIST Tim Bowness formed the influential No-Man in 1987 with Steven Wilson (the pair's podcast *The Album Years* is a must-hear), and over his 40-year career his classy, moody music has made his name in rock's progressive circles. Jethro Tull's Ian Anderson, Van der Graaf Generator's Peter Hammill and Magazine's Dave Formula are among the guests on *Butterfly Mind*, his seventh solo album.

So much has changed since you started out. Are we in a better place now than we were in 1982?

I started off in bands as a teenager during the Falklands War, and politically and in terms of global threat we're probably in as bad a position today, if not worse. Certainly it's an awful lot worse for musicians – the opportunities are fewer, despite there being more media outlets. I don't envy any musician starting off in 2022.

Creatively, what were you going for on *Butterfly Mind*?

Every album I make is a reaction to the previous one – either a continuation of what I was doing or, as with *Butterfly Mind*, a complete rejection of it. I wanted to make something that surprised both me and the listener. *It's Easier To Love* and *Dark Nevada Dream* are in the 'atmospheric ballad' territory I'm most know for, but songs like *Only A Fool* and *Always The Stranger* are the short, sharp shocks. It's one of the most experimental albums I've made, but one of my most direct and accessible as well.

Ian Anderson, Peter Hammill and Dave Formula bring a lot of vitality and experience to the record.

Completely. All three are in their mid-seventies and they're still interesting,

interested, and as creative, energetic and powerful as they ever were.

Your friend Steven Wilson mixed and mastered the album. What does he bring to a project in that capacity?

He's one of the best mixers in the world, and because I've been in a band with him since 1987 he has an incredible sense for what I might like – including the surprises – and he's accepting when I say: "Okay, could you look at it in this way?" He's phenomenally quick too, because he has such a feel and enthusiasm for music.

Are No-Man still a going concern?

We've never split up and we're continually in contact, but we're both involved in quite a lot of projects. I really hope we do something

fresh with No-Man before we both expire. But I couldn't tell you when that'll be. Maybe September 2036?

Your podcast *The Album Years* is up to 1978 – The Who, Springsteen, Tom Waits and Queen are all in there. Do classic rock bands feature in your own musical listening?

I'm a huge fan of The Who, and *Bohemian Rhapsody* was one of the first records I bought as a kid; it's a magnificent piece of work. The late seventies/early eighties was the most exciting period for me. I'd listen to John Peel but also to Tommy Vance, and both introduced me to artists that excited me. So there was Pink Floyd's *The Wall*, Fleetwood Mac's *Tusk*, and also Magazine, Joy Division and Wire coming through, and Peter Gabriel, Robert Fripp and Brian Eno were responding to that new energy. That period is a bit of a sweet spot for me. **GM**

Butterfly Mind is out on August 5 via InsideOut/Sony.



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MY FIRST LOVE

Black Sabbath HEAVEN & HELL

By Geoff Tate

The former Queensrÿche vocalist pays homage to the Sabs' first with RJD.

"I'm a huge fan of the three studio albums that Black Sabbath made with Ronnie James Dio on vocals. I suppose I like *Heaven And Hell* the



best of the three because it was the trilogy's first. I still remember buying my original copy on vinyl. The five members of what became Queensrÿche sat around and listened to that album, talked about it and really

digested it. It was a great springboard to push our own creativity.

"As a well-respected guy who'd been working with bands like Iron Maiden, Martin Birch did a great job with the production. He really helped to bring the songs to life.

"One thing that's sometimes forgotten is that Black Sabbath were on a downward curve until *Heaven And Hell*. After sacking Ozzy Osbourne they were written off by just about everybody. It was almost expected that they would fade out. But together with Ronnie they made an extraordinary album, and of course the opposite thing happened. The only thing I don't like about it is that it could have been longer. Eight songs aren't enough. But that's how records were made in those days.

"For me, *Heaven And Hell* was where it all began. It had so much musicality. Sabbath took their songs into areas I'd never experienced before. Maybe the best compliment I could pay is that it was elegant yet very brutal." **DL**



NEWS

Jimmy Page has revealed that **Led Zeppelin** passed on a proposal to turn the band's music into a new virtual show featuring avatars, similar to the ABBA Voyage concerts in London. Page told *The Guardian* that he and the group's surviving members Robert Plant and John Paul Jones couldn't agree on the idea, so it "didn't really get moving".

Metallica have donated 130,000 euros (approximately £111,400) to flood disaster victims in western Germany. Last summer the area was besieged with several months' worth of rainfall in just 22 hours, causing 196 deaths in that country and 243 fatalities across Europe.

Primus have cancelled their forthcoming European tour, on which the band were to perform the Rush album *A Farewell To Kings* in its entirety, due to "unavoidable logistical challenges".

Halestorm's **Lizzy Hale** celebrated Pride Month by taking to Instagram to declare herself "unapologetically bisexual". She encouraged others to "embrace what makes you stand out" from the crowd.



An officially endorsed biography of **Gary Moore** (pictured) is published on September 27 via Jawbone Press. Backed by the family of Moore, who died in 2011, *Gary Moore: The Official Biography* was written by Harry Shapiro, author of previous books based on Jimi Hendrix, Eric Clapton and others.



WELCOME BACK

Snowy White

The veteran guitarist on ghosting the Floyd, washing up with Peter Green and how to wind up Roger Waters.

TERENCE 'SNOWY' WHITE has always seemed like an accidental guitar hero. Raised on the Isle of Wight in the 1950s, the modest now 74-year-old was a British blues-boom disciple who tells us today that "the limit of my ambition was to play simple blues phrases over simple chord progressions – and it still is".

White has done plenty of that across his four-decade solo career, which includes the '83 hit single *Bird Of Paradise*, and continues with this year's *Driving On The 44* album. But fame also came calling whether he liked it or not, thanks to playing with peak-period Pink Floyd and an unravelling Thin Lizzy.

The new album's lyrics often sound like you're pining for the road. How hard was it to step back from live work in 2019 due to your health issues?

In some respects it was difficult, but I've had to admit to myself that nothing lasts for ever. My fingers don't really do what my brain tells them to these days, and it became more stressful than fun. It was just time.

Studio-wise, though, it's obvious that you can still cut it.

Yeah, but I can do a guitar part then have a break, as opposed to doing an hour and a half solid.

You were close to Peter Green. What's your favourite memory of him?

When he stayed at my parents' house on the Isle of Wight. It only occurred to me recently how surreal it was, because he slept in my old bedroom, where I used to sit for weeks learning his guitar phrases – you know, there was Pete, snoring away. He'd help with the washing up, too. I washed and he dried. My mum thought he was a nice boy.

How do you feel when you see Peter portrayed as this tragic figure?

Well, he turned into a slightly tragic figure. He went very strange in the end. I'd go and see him and he was in a really strange way, his fingernails so long they curled up. He'd just let himself go. That was sad. But I accepted it as Pete's path.

Roger Waters has a reputation among music journalists as being pretty ferocious. Have we got him all wrong?

Roger can be ferocious. He gets into places in his mind where he just doesn't want to put up with any crap. Which is fair enough. He doesn't put up with fools or people who aren't pulling their weight, and he gets a bit cross with them. But if you're working

with him and you're doing your best, then you get treated extremely well. He's fun.

What makes you so good at working with superstars?

It's because I really don't care. With Pink Floyd [he first toured with them in 1977] I didn't even realise they were a particularly big band. I was quite narrow-minded. If it didn't have a blues guitar solo in it, I didn't listen. I was probably the only person in the UK who'd never heard *Dark Side Of The Moon*. Somebody said their manager had been trying to get in touch and maybe I should call him. I didn't bother. I just sort of drifted into the gig.

You don't get impressed by fame?

No. And I can't understand people who do. I mean, after a long tour playing stadiums and flying around in jets, I get back home and within ten minutes I'm up there unplugging the shower. **HY**

Driving On The 44 is out now via Soulfood.

★ HIGH HOPES

Brave Rival

These rootsy headbangers from Plymouth are always up for a piña colada.

LINDSEY BONNICK is still feeling last night's gig. "I can't stop myself from headbanging," drawls one half of Brave Rival's frontline. "I always regret it the day after, but I just can't help it. Chloe [Josephine, the other half] is more of a strutter, so she'll be strutting while I'm jumping up and down..."

The two singers also have different drinks orders. "I'm a gin and tonic," considers Bonnick. "Chloe is a piña colada. As for Donna [Peters, drums], Ed [Clarke, guitars] and Billy [Dedman, bass], you can get them a nice ale."

Synergy is fine, but sometimes an amicable tussle makes for a great band. In the case of Portsmouth's Brave Rival, the yin-yang of Bonnick's low, ghostly vocal and Josephine's powerhouse belt lets the pair stomp all over the gamut of roots genres on their debut album *Life's Machine*, from the blues-rocking *Heart Attack* to the soul-smoked *Fool Of You*. "We make music that you feel is familiar," says Bonnick, "but done in a new way."

Comparisons to Fleetwood Mac are inevitable – and are taken as a compliment – but the roots of Brave Rival are closer to another of their big influences. "We've had the same journey as Heart," Bonnick reflects. "They started out more acoustic then went on to heavier stuff. Myself, Chloe and Donna began as a folk act, but we wanted to do something grittier."

Moments such as *What's Your Name Again?* and *Run And Hide* certainly have the rafter-shaking riffs to satisfy their home town's drunken sailors. "Actually, it's more like drunken students," Bonnick says dryly.

On those songs, the lyrics are uncomplicated and pleasingly waspish, engineered to shout back.

"A lot of my lyrics are story-based," says Bonnick. "*What's Your Name Again?* is about a one-night stand and being so drunk that you don't know where you are in the morning. *Guilty Love* was by Chloe and that's a bit of an 'f you' to a past relationship."

But there's sensitivity, too, on the sad glisten of *Long Time Coming* and the wistful six-minute closing title track.

"*Long Time Coming* is very poignant to me, because I wrote that lyric about missing my family," says Bonnick. "Chloe wrote the *Life's Machine* lyric," she continues. "Back when we were given an hour each day to go outside, Chloe would walk past this one particular house where an old lady lived. Then she stopped seeing her. Then the garden started overgrowing. And then the house was sold. Those times were really intense."

No wonder Brave Rival have hit the live circuit like a train since restrictions lifted. And if bringing rock'n'roll audiences back to life causes Bonnick a little neck ache, so be it.

"Some of these songs make you dance," she says. "Some make you cry, some make you sing at the top of your lungs." **HY**

Life's Machine is out now via *Brave Rival*.

FOR FANS OF...



"Our influences are wide," says Lindsey Bonnick: "Aretha Franklin, Led Zeppelin, Thunder, Heart. But the Tedeschi Trucks Band might be our biggest. I'm a massive fan. I love Susan Tedeschi's voice and the way she writes. It was the *Revelator* album, and the song *These Walls*, that basically started Brave Rival."



“We make music you feel is familiar,
but done in a new way.”

Marshall Tucker Band

Can't You See

It took two releases for the single to reach the dizzy heights of No.75 in the US, but *Can't You See's* longevity and influence have far outweighed any disappointment at its commercial success.

Words: **Dave Ling**

Although it's almost exactly 50 years ago, Doug Gray still recalls the day that his Marshall Tucker Band bandmate guitarist Toy Caldwell, introduced the group to a new composition called *Can't You See* during a rehearsal in their home town of Spartanburg, South Carolina.

"Toy walked in and said: 'I want you to hear this song I've been working on; I've got a great first verse,'" the singer relates nostalgically. "I had to write down the second verse on a piece of brown paper because Toy couldn't remember it. I've still got that piece of paper, as a matter of fact."

Caldwell's first arrangement of it was fairly primitive, and after the band decided that what it really required was a flute intro they turned to their gifted multi-instrumentalist Jerry Eubanks. The flute isn't used much in southern rock, but Eubanks's swooping, summery solo, evocative of a summer skylark, became a signature element of the song.

"We knew that we did not want a run-of-the-mill guitar or a piano part, so to make it unique we called up our buddy Jerry and he came up with something that fitted," Gray explains.

Although he could have got territorial, when the quintet arrived at Capricorn Sound Studios in Macon, Georgia to work with producer Paul Hornsby, Gray proposed the song's composer, Caldwell, should sing the song instead of himself.

"It was better suited for a rougher voice than mine," he reasons. "I knew right away that that song did not belong to me [as the singer], it was America's song. It belonged to the universe."

However, Caldwell disagreed. Although Gray was adamant about passing over the song, Caldwell demanded to hear it in the hands of the group's lead vocalist.

"I ran through it a couple of times and purposely sang like crap," Gray laughs. "So we gave it back to Toy and he laid it down in ten minutes, far better than I could. He sang like he was testifying. Now that it's become a universal song, I always ask the

audience – which is comprised of folks from ten years of age to people older than me, and I'm 74 now – to sing the first verse. Now all of those folks testify too.

"Even yesterday I was singing that song up in North Carolina, and in Nevada the day before that, but we had no idea that the song would become so popular," he continues. "*Can't You See* has been heard in pubs and clubs and on stages right across the world."

Coloured by lyrical references to riding a freight train, *Can't You See* paints an evocative picture of the American South, although with its subject aiming to 'find me a hole in the wall' and 'crawl inside and die' there's also darkness present. It's certainly a song of contradictions.

"It truly is," Gray agrees. "And we didn't realise this until five years ago, that the titles of all our albums from the second one onwards have references that all correspond to each other [and escapism in general], from *A New Life* [74] and *Searching For A Rainbow* [75] right through to the most recent one we did [2007's *The Next Adventure*]. That wasn't intentional, it just happened that way."

The Marshall Tucker Band's self-titled debut album was a US Top 30 success, but when *Can't You See* was released as a single it peaked at No.108. Later on, Capricorn gave it another try, but it barely grazed the Top 75. Although the song was never a massive hit when it came to sales, it has enjoyed longevity and renown.

"That's true, and I don't know why," Gray says. "It certainly helped that the band enjoyed a couple of bigger hits during the same decade, notably *Fire On The Mountain* and *Heard It In A Love Song*, which allowed them to grow."

"I could play you a version of Waylon Jennings singing *Can't You See* [in 1976]," Gray enthuses. "The Zak Brown Band cut it with Kid Rock [2010]. It's made us a considerable amount of friends, and that's before we get into contestants covering it on TV singing shows like *The Voice*. It's in five Netflix movies right now."

The song was also covered by Black

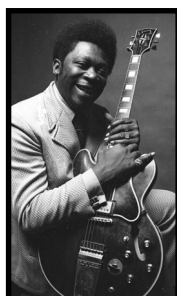


Stone Cherry and, er... Poison. Is Gray familiar with those? "Yuh," he affirms. "I've got about forty versions of *Can't You See* by other artists."

With this year marking the 50th anniversary of the Marshall Tucker Band, Gray intends to continue gigging until the moment he drops.

"The original band was only together for eight years and I'm the last of those guys, but what makes me proudest is that we are still going strong," he beams.

"Most of the current guys have been with me for twenty-five years and it's a solid band. It's going to be that way until I wave goodbye from my gurney after I die on stage. I won't be retiring. There's still too much fun left in me."



WHEN BB KING SUPPORTED THE MTB

When The Marshall Tucker Band took off for the first time, during the early 1970s, promoters began inviting them to pick their support act.

"Suddenly we were in 20,000 seaters," Doug Gray recalls.

"We had played with all of those southern bands like the Allman Brothers and the rest. At the time, BB King was not so popular. We had him and his entire band come out with us; our two bands did maybe forty shows together. Some people still talk about that incredible tour, and they always will because it was a tribute to the humanity of music."

Marshall Tucker Band: recording their debut album at Capricorn Studios on July 4, 1973 in Macon, Georgia.



Lynyrd Skynyrd are on their final lap, and the MTB's friend and collaborator Charlie Daniels died in 2020. When Gray is asked if he fears for the future of southern rock, he sidesteps our question.

"The new way is the old way – that's the way it should be," he insists. "Blackberry Smoke are doing it right. They're not hard rockers, they have meaningful songs and they're creating new memories from what's gone before."

But when compared to the goliaths of the genre, why are the Marshall Tucker Band not better known?

"We never took advantage of a death," he replies, leaving that remark to hang in the air for a moment. "So many other bands did it. People tried to make us do the same [Toy Caldwell died in 1993, a decade after leaving; his bass-playing brother Tom died in a traffic accident in 1980], but we just wouldn't."

Marshall Tucker visited the UK only once, with labelmates Grinderswitch and Bonnie Bramlett as part of a 1976 Capricorn Records package called Straight Southern Rock, but Gray has no regrets.

"I wouldn't have done anything any differently," he concludes, eyes twinkling. "I did my share of every drug you could find and any experience you could have wanted. When the southern bands went out together, I protected them.

"I had the ability to act straight to explain away a TV set exploding after a beer had been poured into it: 'I don't know what happened, sir... that thing just blew up!' I knew that my brother Ronnie [Van Zant, of Skynyrd] had done it, but I lied like a motherfucker. Somebody had to!" 🍷

|||||||
"It's made us a considerable amount of friends. I've got about forty versions of *Can't You See* by other artists."

THE FACTS

RELEASE DATE

Early 1973, reissued 1977

HIGHEST

CHART

POSITION

US No.75; did not chart in UK

PERSONNEL

Tom Caldwell
Bass, percussion, drums

Toy Caldwell
Guitars, lead vocals

Doug Gray
Percussion

Jerry Eubanks
Flute, alto sax, percussion

George McCorkle
Rhythm guitar, percussion
Paul Riddle
Drums

WRITTEN BY

Toy Caldwell

PRODUCED BY

Paul Hornsby

LABEL

Capricorn

Chuck Leavell

He's been with the Stones for most of their 60 years, but still gets thrills from watching his bandmates on stage.

Interview: **Ian Fortnam**

Having earned his spurs playing keyboards alongside Dr John while still in his teens, Alabama-born Chuck Leavell joined the Allman Brothers Band as they reached their commercial peak. Following a stint with Sea Level, he was taken on board by the Rolling Stones in 1981, and has appeared on every album since 1983's *Undercover*. In addition to having worked alongside Eric Clapton, Chuck Berry, the Black Crowes, David Gilmour and George Harrison, he's also one of the world's leading authorities on sustainable forestry. It'll be more a case of keys than trees this summer, though, as he sets out with the Stones in celebration of the band's 60th anniversary.

How did a southern upbringing shape the man you became?

My hands and fingers have a southern accent. I'm grateful for growing up in the south because my musical influences were so diverse: country, rhythm and blues, soul, Delta blues, gospel and, because I'm a child of the sixties, the British invasion. My first band did a lot of Stones and Beatles, but never in my wildest dreams did I think I'd ever play with these guys.

What attracted you to the piano?

My mother. I was the youngest of three, so when I was about five my older brother and sister would be in school, my dad out working and mum played the piano. She'd set me up there and say: "What would it sound like if there was a big storm outside?" And I'd rumble down on the low end, do some lightning strikes. "What would it sound like if you were mad at a friend?" So music's always been a thing with emotions, feelings and colours, not just chords and notes.

You were invited into the Allman Brothers Band to replace the late Duane Allman, who died in 1971.

They first went out as a five-piece with no replacement for Duane – a gutsy, ballsy thing to do. You can't really replace Duane Allman, so Dickie Betts had to step up, take on all guitar duties, and he'd never really played slide before. When they came back from tour they were emotionally spent, physically drained, and took a break.

Gregg [Allman] wanted to do a solo record, which I was called in to do, and during the process after-hours jams started with the rest of the Allmans. We were improvising, things were developed, and Phil Walden, the band's manager, called me into his office and said: "The guys feel the band's going in an interesting direction. Would you like to join?" Yes, I would.

How were you first approached by the Rolling Stones?

The Stones wanted some new faces in 1981, and [promoter] Bill Graham mentioned my name. I got a call from [original Stones pianist] Ian Stewart, and within thirty-six hours I was on a plane for the audition. And it went very well. I stayed three days, and thought I had the position, but they kept Ian McLagan for that tour.

Later that year they came to Atlanta and Stu called me: [adopts British accent] "We're going to be in your backyard. Do you want to

come along and have a bash?" So I got up and sat in on a few songs. Towards the end of the year Stu called and said: "We're going to tour Europe next year, and everyone's decided they want you." So that was when I first got the official position.

You arrived into the Stones at a time of internal conflict between Mick and Keith.

Things were tense. It wasn't the best time in their relationship at all. But even with that tension, making music was a process that they knew they had to complete. It wasn't just an obligation to a label, it was about making music. I really admire how they found a way to work through it. And that speaks volumes about why we are celebrating sixty years of the Rolling Stones. They've always found a way to make it work, and at this day in time the band is closer than ever. We lost Charlie [Watts] last year, which was so tragic, and we all still sting very much from it, personally and musically. We think about him every day.

Steve Jordan, who has replaced him on drums, has clearly studied Charlie's style meticulously.

Steve's more of an aggressive player. Although Charlie played with heavy sticks, he had a delicate touch, but he got a big sound with those heavy sticks. Steve hits a little bit harder from beginning to end, and gets an equally big sound because of the way he dynamically plays the drums, but he always honours Charlie, and it's beautiful the way he does. Little nuances like *Start Me Up*'s missed snare hit, one of the great mistakes of rock'n'roll... Steve knows where every one of those little bits is, and he performs them all.

You're also the Rolling Stones' musical director.

I scoff at it a bit, because Mick and Keith are the musical directors as far as I'm concerned. I started taking notes during the *Steel Wheels* tour rehearsals and gradually built up handwritten chord charts, which turned into loose-leaf notebooks. I set tempos, became the go-to guy for arrangements, which started to translate into cues on stage.

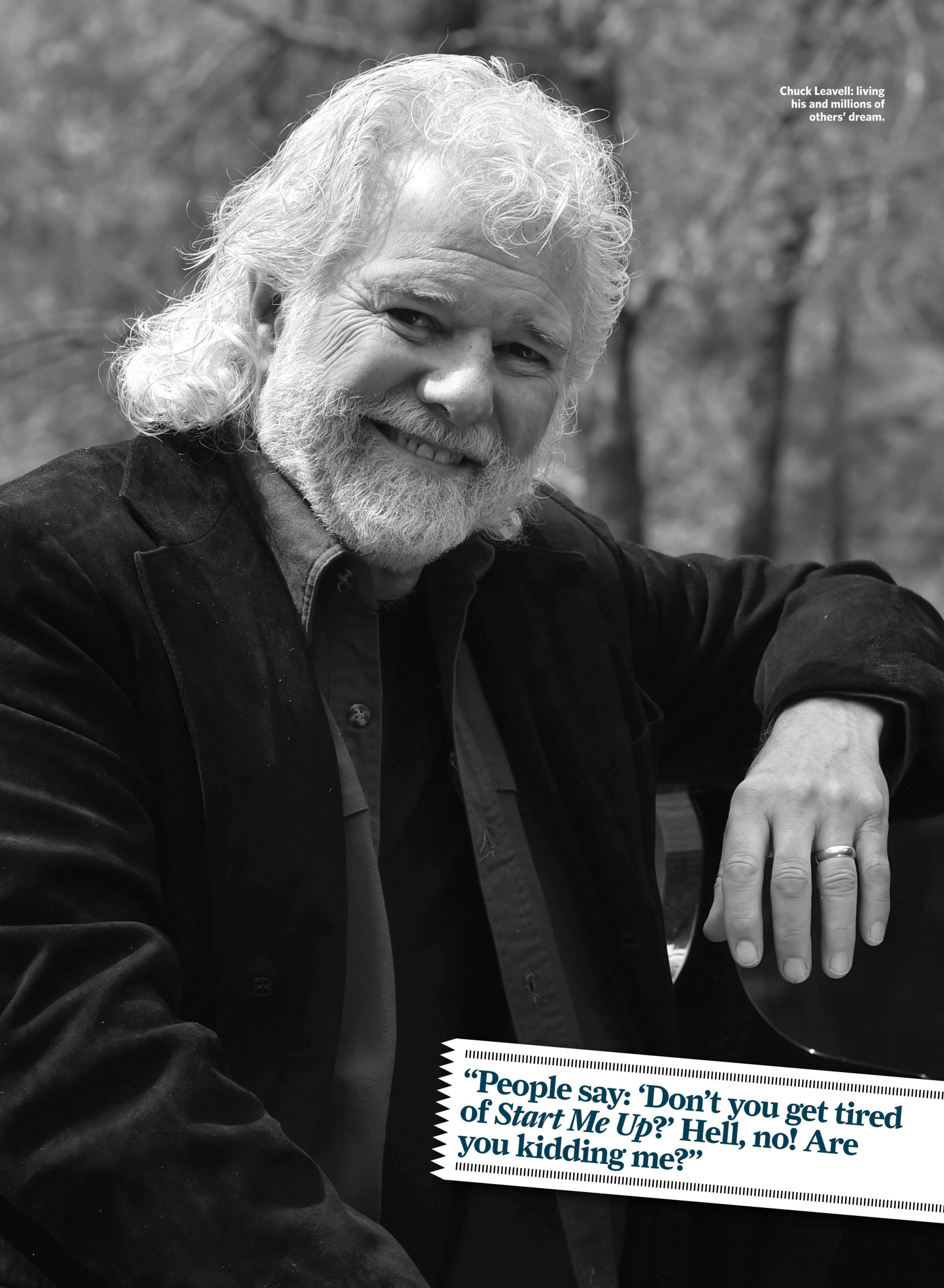
Being a jazz drummer in a rock band, Charlie would sometimes need cues as to when a breakdown was coming. And if Mick's working the crowd he might look back and I can give him a signal to keep rolling, or here comes the verse [gives a V sign], here comes the chorus [forms his finger and thumb into a C shape], that kind of thing. I also put together the set-lists.

You've worked with some of the biggest names in music.

What's your ultimate 'is this really happening to me' moment?

Every night with the Rolling Stones – and I'm serious, man. People say: "Don't you get tired of *Start Me Up* or any of those songs you've played a thousand times?" And the answer is: "Hell, no!" Are you kidding me? I look over here and I'm like: "Is that Keith Richards? Is that Ronnie Wood?" I'm thrilled every time. 🎸

*Chuck Leavell's latest album **Chuck Gets Big** (with the Frankfurt Radio Big Band), is out now via BMG.*

A black and white photograph of Chuck Leavell. He is an older man with long, wavy white hair and a full white beard. He is smiling and looking towards the camera. He is wearing a dark jacket over a dark shirt. His right hand is resting on a surface, and a ring is visible on his ring finger. The background is out of focus, showing some foliage.

Chuck Leavell: living
his and millions of
others' dream.

**“People say: ‘Don’t you get tired
of *Start Me Up*?’ Hell, no! Are
you kidding me?”**

6 THINGS YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT...

His Lordship

They listen to what Chrissie Hynde says, they're cranked up, they wear cheap suits, they dig raw rock'n'roll...

Interview: **Ian Fortnam**

IMBUED WITH THE unquiet spirit of raw, unhinged rock'n'roll, His Lordship have stripped 21st-century post-rock sophistication back to a rip-snoiting, souped-up skeletal chassis that's part hot rod, part brutal assault.

There's just the two of them – James Walborne covers guitar and vocals, Kristoffer Sonne supplies the beat – and they're never more comfortable than when they're bouncing in the red. They've got Jerry Lee snake oil in their veins, channelling The Cramps and backwoods rockabilly psychosis and oozing an aura of bourbon-soaked sonic delinquency. But, says James: "We don't want to be a fucking retro thing. We don't wanna write about being in a Cadillac. We want to write about now."

His Lordship, sonics set to 'stun', all cranked up and as edgy as an amphetamine breakfast, lean in close with obvious conspiratorial urgency: "To breathe the new life into rock'n'roll. That's our mission."

All roads lead to Chrissie Hynde.

Walborne (Camden) and Sonne (Denmark) met while working with Chrissie Hynde. The former has been the guitarist with The Pretenders since 2008, while the latter was brought in from Brett Anderson's band to appear on a Hynde solo record.

"We just hit it off," Walborne says with a shrug, "became good friends, drank together and started rock'n'roll bands together."

So what did Their Lordships learn under La Hynde's benign dictatorship?

"She blows your mind every day," says Sonne. "The music we love? She was there when it was made."

"She's full of wisdom," Walborne continues. "And you'd better listen. Do not interrupt."

They have an unwritten manifesto that's short, sharp and to the point.

Just as lockdown was about to lock down, His Lordship articulated their defining visceral blurt, *All Cranked Up*.

"We've always been restless, but as the pandemic took hold we rediscovered why the fuck we did this in the first place," says Walbourne. "We got to the point where we just got fed up with labels. This band comes directly from that feeling of thinking: 'Fuck this, fuck them, we're

gonna do this. If you like it, great; if you don't, fuck off."

Lockdown has left them all cranked up.

"We got together right at the start of the pandemic and have only been able to do four or five gigs so far," Lordship Walborne moans in a tangible state of abject frustration. "But we're going out on tour in July, so I'll be able to tell you how raucous and debauched the road gets then. But, you know, Ipswich on a Tuesday night? How debauched can it get?"

They dress up to mess up.

His Lordship wear suits. Cheap suits.

"We wanted something cheap so we went to Topman," admits Walborne. "We wear them every night now. I quite like putting on the suit, it's like becoming Superman."

But cheap suits do come with disadvantages. "I did the splits one night, split my whole trousers. And now Topman's closed and I can't get any more."

They're not entirely opposed to the concept of the bass player.

While there are only two of them, His Lordship claim they're not on an anti-bass crusade. "We just work together as a duo really quickly," Walborne insists, "and I might play bass on our recordings sometimes."

"It's not a dogma," Sonne claims. "We had a bass player but he moved to New Zealand... What does a bass player use for contraception? His personality."

Hmm, I wonder why he left.

They're the hardest-working men in show business.

"It's hard work playing rock'n'roll," Sonne insists. "You have to sweat; you can't just press a button. You sometimes come off stage thinking: 'Why am I doing this?'"

"But it's never gonna get old," Walborne concludes. "Raw rock'n'roll on stage is something to behold. You don't see it very often now, it's not in the zeitgeist any more, but it feels like it might be coming back." 🎸

The All Cranked Up EP is out on July 1st via Psychonaut Sounds.



**His Lordship: as edgy as an
amphetamine breakfast.**





ZZ Top with new bassist Elwood Francis at Thunder Valley Casino Resort, California, June 2022.

***"You might consider
us being somewhat
new as a band"***

Billy Gibbons

NO STOPPING THE TOP

The death last year of bassist/vocalist Dusty Hill looked like it might be the end of **ZZ Top**. But no. With their guitar tech now filling his shoes, it's business as usual.

Words: **David Sinclair**

"Get a hat!"
"Get a beard!"
ZZ Top at Georgia
Southern College
Coliseum, October 1973.



"[After Dusty Hill died] we felt it would be more suitable to try to carry on, rather than just throw in the towel."

Billy Gibbons

The revival – and indeed the very survival – of ZZ Top in 2022 is something of a miracle. The longest-lasting trio in the history of rock were still touring America to celebrate (belatedly) their 50th anniversary when bass player and singer Dusty Hill died in his sleep at the age of 72 last August. He was replaced apparently seamlessly by Billy Gibbons's guitar tech, Elwood Francis, and the show just kept on rolling.

Less than a year later, the band have recently wrapped up a tour of Canada and are currently on their Raw Whisky Tour of the USA, a full-throttle, 50-plus-dates excursion in support of their latest album *Raw*. Reports of the early shows suggest a band that are not just fully functioning, but also actively re-energised. Can this be true?

"Yes indeed," Gibbons says, on a day off from a full-on schedule. "It's quite a trip having Elwood step in to help keep the ball rolling. He's adding a great bit of enthusiasm. When I see [drummer] Frank Beard smiling for the first time in thirty years, I know something good's happening."

Francis, from Lexington, Kentucky, age (said to be) 60, has worked with Gibbons and ZZ Top since the early 1990s. As well as maintaining the group's magnificent arsenal of vintage, specialist and sometimes bizarre novelty guitars in peak performance mode, he has played harmonica in Gibbons's solo touring band and is guitarist in his own punk band the Mighty Skullhead. Intriguingly, it was Hill's idea to bring him in as a substitute bass player.

"Dusty knew that he might be out for a bit,"

Gibbons recalls. "He was somewhat out of sorts, and he requested permission to pay a visit to the physician. And his remarks were aimed at bringing Elwood into the fold, being that he was a family member for over thirty years who knew all the ropes. And with that in mind, Elwood tipped his hat and agreed to take the reins."

In what would appear to be a heroic mark of respect for the ZZ Top brand, Francis – who was clean-shaven when I met him in 2018 – has grown a beard to match that of his illustrious predecessor.

"When Elwood jumped aboard initially, he was a skateboarder eating an avocado sandwich," Gibbons says. "No one even knew that he had whiskers until he showed up to a rehearsal, and I said: 'Who's the new guy?' And the chief technician said: 'That's your guitar technician, Elwood.' I said: 'No, the guy with the big beard.' And he said: 'Yeah, that's Elwood.'"

Despite being at the heart of one of the most rigorous rock'n'roll operations on the planet, Gibbons likes to keep things spontaneous, and regards the arrival of the new beard as divine serendipity.



Late-70s ZZ Top.



Beer drinker, but no longer hell raiser. Today's Billy Gibbons.

"That's the real miracle," he says. "The irony was that it was not so different to what brought ZZ Top into this whiskered imagery in the first place. It started because Dusty and I simply got lazy. And when I quizzed Elwood he said: 'Yeah, I wasn't doing much. Just hanging around the house. And I just got out of the habit. Next thing I knew I had a doormat hanging from my chin.'"

It seems quite astonishing that the band would have acquired a fully bearded understudy ready to take over from Hill without being aware beforehand that something was seriously amiss. Were there any warning signs, or was his death a complete shock?

"It was very unexpected," Gibbons says. "Although Dusty had his bouts with this and that, he seemed to bounce back each time. And in fact when we were preparing for the tour we had a seven-days planned rehearsal and everything was straight ahead. Dusty wasn't really out of sorts until we showed up for the first performance. We got through the evening but I could tell he

wasn't a hundred per cent. And finally he said: 'I'd like to take a moment and go see the physician and see if we can iron out what's got me on the ropes.' He returned to Texas and made an appointment to see the doc. And it was that night he went to sleep and it was... lights out. It was just... it was totally unexpected."

What did Gibbons feel when he got the news of Dusty's passing?

"It took a moment for the reality to sink in. But, you know, he's no different from the rest of us; unfortunately we're all going to go some time. We prefer to put it off, if you know what I mean. The day after Dusty passed, I spoke with a good friend, another guitar player, Steve Cropper. And years before, when Duck Dunn [bass player with Cropper in Booker T. & the M.G.'s] passed away, I took note of Cropper's remarks. He said: 'I feel like I've lost a great friend. And that went well beyond another musician. He was well beyond that.' And we felt that way about Dusty. We lost a great friend." ➤

A SPIN OF THE TOP'S

Billy Gibbons looks in the rear-view mirror and gives some observations on ZZ Top's studio-albums back catalogue.

ZZ TOP'S FIRST ALBUM 1971

Highlights: *Brown Sugar, Goin' Down To Mexico*



"It was recorded when we first formed, in 1970, and wrapped up by about March 1970. I had assembled a personal catalogue, which fortunately became what we called the band catalogue

when Dusty [Hill, bass] and Frank [Beard, drums] entered the picture.

"The only thing that kept us going on that first album was the fact that we had the opportunity to release a record on the same label as the Rolling Stones [London Records]. I'm serious - that was it!

"But we remained true to the core: it was twelve-bar blues or bust. The playing was there, the tempo was good, and it's very bluesy. I listened to it for the first time in a while and said: 'Man, we sure were bluesy.' It's a period kind of sound.

"Is ZZ Top a blues band? Well, we're interpreters of blues bands. The wave of blues we enjoyed - not only being a part of, but also influenced by - was ushered in by the English guys. I think it would be fair to say that we were subliminally influenced throughout: The Animals, the Stones, The Beatles, The Who, The Kinks, Clapton, Beck... maybe a couple more. Which is kind of what got us thinking: 'Hey, we can hot-rod this stuff and make it really fun to play for ZZ Top.' There's a handful of Americans, a handful of guys from England, a handful of guys from points around the world that recognised the value of the impact of this strain of music that goes all the way back to Africa. And I'll be honest with ya, I still dig it."

RIO GRANDE MUD 1972

Highlights: *Francine, Just Got Paid*



"I was using a lot of Fenders [guitars] in the studio but I quit playing them live about 1973. *Apologies To Pearly* was played on a Fender Stratocaster tuned to open E, and *Chevrolet* was again

a Strat, with out-of-phase positioning on the front two pickups.

"*Francine* was written with a guy who's dead now, Steve Perron, who was a great writer. He loved the Stones, and that was his tag at the end [*Francine* borrows from the climax of the Stones' *Brown Sugar*]. It was kind of unintentional at the time, but very close.

"It's not like these sounds haven't been done before, it just took somebody like ZZ Top to come along and put them in their proper perspective. I'm just excited by the continuance of the development of new sounds."

TRES HOMBRES 1973

Highlights: *Waitin' For the Bus, La Grange, Hot, Blue And Righteous*



"That's the famous Mexican food [inside sleeve photo] album. We stretched out and kind of went down the boundaries, if you will. And although the song *La Grange* was the first ZZ Top Top 10, it remained well within the reaches of the Blues - capital B - the confines on which we base the band to this very day.

"That was the beginning of using harmonics. Harmonic city. My solo playing back then was pretty quick. The funny thing was, I slowed down later on to make the articulation more apparent and to eliminate any sloppiness. But listening back, I think the execution was fine. So I don't think it's anything to be ashamed of."

FANDANGO! 1975

Highlights: *Tush, Heard It On The X*



"After the successful release of *Tres Hombres*, we attempted to keep the records kind of bluesy. But we also allowed the one oddball track here and there. We'll fast-forward to *Heaven, Hell Or Houston* [on *El Loco*] and even *Manic Mechanic* [*Deguello*] that still stands on the fringe.

"*Tush* was on *Fandango!*. We wrote that in Muscle Shoals, Alabama - and boy, it was hot and steamy! We were at some rodeo building and we came up with that. It just happened - we wrote it on the spot at a rehearsal. We were playing some show that night and wrote it before the show. Dusty sang it and never changed it. It was fun. I think my slide work in that was some of the best I've ever done. I still play that live about the same."

TEJAS 1977

Highlights: *It's Only Love, Arrested For Driving While Blind*



"I played harmonica on this one, on *It's Only Love*. Talking about harmonica, you say: 'Well how much more blues-tech does ZZ Top care to get?' There will be a line drawn before tech-blues will just become tech and you'll want to hear more blues. And there's the wah-wah on *Snappy Kakkie* that I've used in a subtle way. Wah-wah can quickly grate if you're not careful. Beck, Clapton, Page and Hendrix were all fairly tasty. I sat with Hendrix and he showed me a lot of licks - and I can't do any of them!"

DEGUELLO 1979

Highlights: *Manic Mechanic, Cheap Sunglasses*



"That was our leap from London Records to Warner Brothers. We attempted to maintain the cornerstone of twelve-bar blues, or just blues music period. Of course, we were bombarded with the punk rock movement.

"Here you find the band starting to stretch out a little bit. It's the first time we used synthesizers, on *Cheap Sunglasses*. I think *Deguello* was the first record we completed after the ushering in of the punk scene. And we can gladly tip our hats to the doors they opened. Here was a kick-ass brand of music that was making a statement: 'To hell with the FM playlist, we're gonna do it like we wanna do it!' I think it allowed us to relax to the point where we could use it.

"We did the two covers *Dust My Broom* and



The sudden passing of Dusty Hill lends a poignancy to ZZ Top's latest album, *Raw*. As Gibbons and Beard write in the album's sleeve-notes: "These stripped down and very raw tracks of abstract blues were the last recordings with Dusty."

"Stripped down" is accurate enough, but doesn't do justice to the brilliance of *Raw*, which finds ZZ revisiting a bunch of lifetime favourites from their back catalogue in a supremely relaxed and empathetic manner. It was recorded during the filming of the ZZ Top TV documentary *That Little Ol' Band From Texas*, itself a work of detailed and affectionate storytelling, which gets as close to the

heart of ZZ Top as any outside agency could reasonably hope to do.

During the making of the film, the band got to set up for an afternoon in Gruene Hall, New Braunfels, a honky-tonk that lays claim to be the oldest dance hall in Texas. Away from the crowds, and relieved of the pressure to perform for anyone other than themselves, they casually - but brilliantly - ran through a bunch of songs with an off-the-cuff warmth and spontaneity that sets a new benchmark for 'live in the studio' recordings.

"It was in a very real way a return to our roots," Gibbons and Beard write in their sleeve-notes. "It was as bare-bones as when we first started

From super beards, via *Eliminator*, to superstars. ZZ Top in 1985.



“When I see [drummer] Frank Beard smiling for the first time in thirty years, I know something good’s happening.”

Billy Gibbons

touring in a behemoth Chrysler station wagon, driving vast stretches between those early far-flung shows under blackened Texas skies and first hearing one of our records on the radio. We were bonded as brothers.”

Beginning with the comparatively obscure *Brown Sugar* from ZZ Top’s *First Album* (released three months before the Rolling Stones song of the same name in 1971), and then working through a bunch of gems including *Blue Jean Blues*, *Just Got Paid* and *I’m Bad, I’m Nationwide*, and carrying on to the monster hits *Legs* and *Gimme All Your Lovin’* from *Eliminator*, the trio embraced their musical legacy in one final, joyful and entirely spontaneous performance, which according to Gibbons they weren’t even aware was being recorded at the time.

“The director said ‘Give us a few minutes, we’re still getting our end of things sorted out.’ So we just began playing,” Gibbons recalls. “Little did we know that the technicians had set up the recording gear and were actually capturing all this.”

Did the band do any overdubs afterwards? Or did Gibbons re-do any of his vocal parts?

“No. As a matter of fact, it was some time after we’d finished the movie that the technician rang up and said: ‘By the way, what should I do with the recordings from Gruene Hall?’ And we were kind of mystified. I said: ‘What recordings are you referring to? We don’t know of anything.’ And he

said: ‘Oh yeah. We captured the whole afternoon.’ And when I listened to it I said: “Gee whizz, maybe we’re okay as a band after all! We don’t really need to do much to this.’ We were pleasantly shocked. It’s about as honest a delivery as we can ask for.”

Aside from the recording session that led to the *Raw* album, Gibbons says his favourite part of *That Little Ol’ Band From Texas* was revisiting the story of the band’s trip to Hawaii, where they supported the Rolling Stones for three shows in 1972. Their manager at the time, Bill Ham, had imposed a two-drink limit on the band members for each night of their stay. But the boys found a bar that served a specialty drink called Chimp In Orbit that was so massive it was served in a three-foot-tall container that sat on the floor and could only be drunk through a long straw. “So our maximum of two drinks was well worth the investigation!” Gibbons says with a laugh.

Since 2006, ZZ Top have been managed by Carl Stubner. But it was Ham who managed the trio from the outset, and who took them from unknown hopefuls to international stardom. Ham died in 2016, and is fondly remembered in the movie, especially by Hill.

“Going back to the beginning,” Gibbons says, “you got to realise that Bill Ham was a guy willing to take on three unruly, rag-tag musicians. And for him to have the vision and foresight to keep ➤

I Thank You on Deguello; there are so many wonderful tunes to be done. We probably do as interesting a set in our dressing room as the one we play on stage. We’ve played a lot of [record label] Stax in the dressing room. I would have loved to have worked with an R&B band. That was a big influence.”

EL LOCO 1981

Highlights: *Tube Snake Boogie*, *Pearl Necklace*



“As far as *El Loco*’s position with current musical trends, we got pigeonholed with a real strange group of friends. *Tube Snake Boogie* ended up being played more

on the punk station here,

KROQ [in Los Angeles], than anywhere else.

“Well, certainly ZZ Top is not a punk band, but it was more of an underground thing. And here we are after twelve years, and finally we’re an underground thing again!

“On *El Loco* there are some interesting offerings, like *Party On The Patio* which doesn’t necessarily leave the three-chord progression behind but it’s definitely a step outside of Clarksdale, Mississippi. Although they probably have a lot of parties on the patio in Mississippi. And the Moog bass lines on *Ten Foot Pole*.

“Of course, some great disasters have occurred when discretion was not exercised. And fortunately our producer [Bill Ham] was functioning as an objective observer who wasn’t caught up in: ‘Hey, I finally made this machine work!’ He was more: ‘Okay, you’ve made it work. Can you make it work with the band?’ Because we were pushing the issue with *Groovy Little Hippie Pad* at the time.

“*El Loco* was a mellower record overall.”

ELIMINATOR 1983

Highlights: *Gimme All Your Lovin’*, *Got Me Under Pressure*, *Sharp Dressed Man*, *Legs*, *I Need You Tonight*



“We had spent quite bit of time really getting serious with tempo and composition. We said: ‘How do we bring blues into this new era?’ With the ushering in of the kind of technology that

the eighties was promising to present, and the kind of creative inventiveness that the technopop bands from England were massaging their hardware into doing, that made it a pretty interesting proposition. ‘Hey, can a down-and-dirty blues band ever make sounds with this stuff that will work?’ That became the backbone. And the real challenge was not necessarily with guitar and bass, but it started with Frank saying: ‘Okay, I’m gonna lay this down here at this beat and you guys fall in.’

“We tried it, and of course it was a mild lean on synthesisers compared to what we did later with *Afterburner*; it was mild compared to what Van Halen were able to do with *Jump*. But all of a sudden, here you’ve got a second-generation wave of synthesisers that offer the kind of manipulations where a more human touch can be put into it.

“There were moments when we thought: ‘Are we making a mistake?’ But there weren’t many of them. At our rehearsal sessions they left us quaking in our boots because we were biting at the bit to use anything we could. But I think [Bill, manager/producer at the time] Ham had a couple of raised eyebrows. I like the analysis of drums to rockabilly – that could be what synthesisers are to blues bands today. They tried it and got away with it, we tried it and got away with it. And I’m curious what might be the next ‘Oh, you can’t do that’ thing. Needless to say, the formula was a success.”

AFTERBURNER 1985

Highlights: *Sleeping Bag, Rough Boy*



"I think we were aware of the success of *Eliminator* and I think we were spending a little more time inspecting the quality of the compositions and the quality of the execution. Because it

was seemingly an impossible task to top *Eliminator*. But we certainly didn't want to feel that we hadn't done everything to at least give it another one of our best.

"We knew, for us, we were tiptoeing through sacred ground by venturing out into synthesiser stuff. But Dusty's approach was: 'Hell, turn it on and I'll make a mess of it quickly' [Hill played the keyboard parts]. I felt the same way: 'Let's not pretend to be experts or technicians with this thing.' Our point is, we probably do better by not knowing enough about it, and consequently our synthesiser work is not the kind of melodic classical thing that people normally would be afraid of.

"We didn't even mention keyboards on the album sleeve. Ham didn't want a bunch of notes on there. I think there was still a point to be proved to a ZZ Top loyalist. If it read 'synthesiser', maybe they would be offended before they would give it a chance to be heard. And I think we fought more the word than the sound.

"The harshest guitar tone I've ever had comes on *Sleeping Bag*. My obscenity comes in harmonics rather than grind for a tone; I really lean heavy on harmonics. And that started with *La Grange*. It happened by accident and the fact that you could control it. Because harmonics are unpredictable it made them fun to use. They're always in the right key, but when you really catch one sideways, man, it's way out!"

RECYCLER 1990

Highlight: *Doubleback*



"We're a band that uses old tricks, new tricks and all points in between. Our attention was shared with the challenges of the studio with producing a stage production that would equate with what we were doing behind closed doors."

ANTENNA 1994

Highlight: *Pin Cushion*



"To sum up the vibe of *Antenna*, we started experimenting with all kinds of luxuries, stuff like two- and three-track overdubs of a vocal. It was during the recording of *Antenna* that we said: 'We can make these guitar tracks giant. What if we did the same treatment with vocal tracks?'"

RHYTHMEEN 1996

Highlights: *Black Fly, Rhythmeen, Zipper Job*



"*Rhythmeen* may stand as the truest test of ZZ Top as a trio. If you listen to that record, there are no overdubs. That was pure band going in and saying: 'Okay, we think we know these songs, we're gonna try and lay 'em down.'"

"It's really a cool record. Prior to that, ZZ Top was actually like a five- or six-piece band. And that was only due to the benefit of multi-tracking. And although we still have that advantage on our side, we wanted a true trio record. *Rhythmeen* brought us back to the *First Album*, to the glory days of *Eliminator*.

Billy Gibbons, Frank Beard and Dusty Hill at the Glastonbury festival in 2016.



"As long as I'm able to get up and have a good time, we'll keep it going."

Billy Gibbons

us together and rolling along was no small feat. I suppose it's somewhat less challenging today. I would hope that we're qualified to be a bit more mature. But still I think the role of management, it's a precarious position to attempt to assume on any level. But it's part of the machine that keeps us rolling."

Like the *Raw* album, *That Little Ol' Band From Texas* has also become Hill's swansong and, as things have turned out, it draws a fitting line under the story of ZZ Top Mk.1. Watching Gibbons, Hill and Beard sitting around a table reflecting on their adventures and then driving off into the sunset together in one of Gibbons's vintage hot rods has a valedictory feel, to put it mildly. However, Gibbons stands firm in stating that this was not their original intention.

"I enjoyed making the movie," he allows. "Once I'd got past the initial exchange with the director [Sam Dunn]. I said to him: 'This sounds like a capital idea.' However, every story requires an ending. And I said: 'I hope you're not trying to bring ZZ Top to a close. Because we're still going strong.' He said: 'Oh no. My aim is to bring the tale forward to the present and let you guys continue moving forward.' I said: 'Okay. If that's the case, we'll get down to business.'

That's all very well. But as Paul Stanley and Gene Simmons have recently been at pains to point out in relation to Kiss: "You have to know when to quit." When Hill died, did Gibbons consider, even for a moment, whether it was time to bring ZZ Top to a close?

"Well it was an unexpected reality that landed not only in my lap, but allowed me to hunker down and get serious with Mister Beard. And the two of us both agreed that as an honour to the legacy of the band, we felt it would be more suitable to try to pick up sticks and carry on, rather than just throw in the towel. And fortunately, with the arrival of Elwood Francis that possibility became a reality. And here we are today having as

much fun up there on stage as we ever have.

"It's interesting. Elwood's background is steeped in the punk-rock world. We were curious if such a background was going to enter the ZZ Top world. But I must say that Elwood's presence brings a robust energy that is actually a boost to ZZ Top. You might even consider us being somewhat new as a band. Which we are! It's really entertaining, I'll say that."

As well as playing bass does Francis cover for Hill in the vocal department?

"He has been able to step up and add his



Elwood Francis with ZZ Top in Reno, Nevada, August 14, 2021.



Just got paid? Gibbons splashes the cash.

interesting colour to the singing," Gibbons says. "He's quite good at harmonising, but he's still a bit shy about taking a lead vocal at this stage of the game. But who knows? I can cut him loose and let him do his thing."

Having undergone the dramatic change of circumstances, ZZ Top have embarked on an unlikely second act. Like the Rolling Stones and AC/DC, they have brushed off a blow that would have stopped other bands in their tracks. At the end of last year they sold off their publishing catalogue, together with their income from recorded royalties and performance royalties, to BMG. It's a move that has not only secured their individual positions financially, but also "ensures the band's recorded legacy will endure for generations to come", according to their manager Stubner.

Gibbons also has plans to move forward with his solo career (now three albums in) and has recording dates "in the book, coming up in the next six weeks" with drummer Matt Sorum and

guitarist Austin Hanks. "We've got a string of songs that were started during the last go-round. So we'll pick up where we left off and give it a go. I'll be getting the solo show back together, and there's talk of some dates in South America."

Meanwhile, ZZ Top are booked solid in venues covering every corner of the USA. Gibbons would also love to bring the band back to Europe and the UK. "I believe it's an issue of playing catch-up," he says. "The promoters are having to deal with having had so many postponed shows over the last couple of years. As soon as we get the green light, we'd love to come and see you, brother."

In looking to the future, the 72-year-old Gibbons cites the words of blues legend the late Muddy Waters: "As long as I'm able to get up and have a good time, we'll keep it going." Those are the words that resonated with Keith Richards, and we can buy into that as well. 🗨

Raw is available now via BMG.

"It allowed us to do some amazing stuff as a trio. When you've got two rhythm guitar parts going on and a lead vocal going on and then you get to lay down a lead guitar track on top, you become like a nine-piece band. So here's *Rhythmeen*, and we're gonna record these as we rehearsed 'em. It took quite a bit of gumption to get to that point."

"The title of the album could basically be interpreted from the words 'mean rhythm'. *Rhythmeen* was really the cornerstone for a true ZZ Top record."

XXX 1999

Highlight: *Poke Chop Sandwich*



"It was like: 'Okay, this feels good. We can still be a blues band and we can stand as a trio. It's just gonna require a little extra practice before we walk into the studio."

"And of course Jeff Beck sings in conjunction with me on the chorus of a song called *Hey Mr. Millionaire*. The invitation arrived to sing on his record, but unfortunately I was way off in Europe and unable to make his deadline. I called him from overseas and he said he was out with BB King, and I was cringing that we were not able to see one of the greatest combination shows ever."

MESCALERO 2003

Highlights: *Piece, Goin' So Good*



"Mescalero started with a trip to the Mexican border - like so many of our records. This particular trip found us sampling the mysterious virtues of mescal, which is the dangerous cousin to

tequila. All of this is tied in with the Mescalero Indian tribe. That's the colourful and humble beginning of this."

"We said: 'Gee whiz, no holds barred - whatever we think will work for ZZ Top.' And then were scratching our heads, going: 'Well, what is ZZ Top?' At this point it's safe to say we don't really know. We've still got a cornerstone; we still got a benchmark of twelve-bar blues. After that, anything goes."

LA FUTURA 2012

Highlights: *Gotsta Get Paid, Flyin' High*



"The band is constantly attempting to expand the elegance of the simple trio for bigger effect. The steady and stalwart sides of the sound - focus and ferocity - remain constant."

It's the addition of fuzz and frazz that builds it up. We're still just three guys drawing on anything and everything to make it snap. That intro riff [on *I Gotsta Get Paid*] sets its southern-ness front and centre. It's a combination of hip-hop and the blues of Lightnin' Hopkins, a homage to these heroes of the Houston ghetto."

"Rick [Rubin, producer] knows what he wants to hear and is patient enough to wait, so some people could be aggravated by what they perceive to be delaying. It's actually the opposite of that. He knows what he wants to hear. It's the arrival of the right moment. He would say things like: 'You don't have to try and be a better band.' That's what got the three of us entering the studio and kind of making it up as we went along."

"It's difficult to find an artist that can do a ZZ Top song, we're so personality-heavy. ZZ's horizon knows no limit. We'll go to the known and just as quickly find ourselves in the land of the unknown!"

THE
★CLASSIC★
Rock
INTERVIEW
DAVE
MUSTAINE

He was there at the beginning of two of metal's most influential groups, drank enough to fill the San Diego river, hit the canvas and lifted himself back up and found God, and still has the ambition to make Megadeth the biggest metal band in the world.

Interview: **Paul Elliott** Portraits: **Travis Shinn**

Dave Mustaine is alive and well. Two years after doctors gave him the all-clear following treatment for throat cancer, he's looking good for his 60 years as he sits in his home office in Tennessee talking to *Classic Rock* about his life and career as the leader of Megadeth.

His face has a few creases, his long hair, once flame-red, is now a shade of grey. But after 20 years of sobriety he looks a whole better than he did the first time I interviewed him, back in 1988, when Megadeth were touring the US as the opening act for Dio. In those days Mustaine had the ghostly pallor that comes with an addiction to hard drugs. As he says now, with a thin smile: "That was a long time ago."

David Scott Mustaine was born on September 13, 1961 in La Mesa, California, a small city east of San Diego. There he endured a difficult childhood; his parents separated when he was four, and his father John was a troubled man whose alcoholism led to his early death. As a teenager Mustaine also developed a taste for alcohol, along with drugs and heavy metal. He was drawn to the raw power of British bands – Judas Priest, Iron Maiden, Motörhead – and playing guitar came easily to him.

In 1981, when Mustaine was 19, his first band Panic split up after their drummer Mike Leftwich was killed in a car crash. It was a tragedy that had a profound influence on Mustaine's life. The disbanding of Panic led him to seek out a new opportunity, and he found it in a new group from Los Angeles called Metallica.

Mustaine was in the band as lead guitarist for less than two years, but in that time he played a key role in creating a sound that would revolutionise heavy music: thrash metal. Eventually his violent drunken rages proved too much even for a band that was nicknamed 'Alcoholica'. Mustaine was dismissed in 1983 as Metallica prepared to record their debut album, *Kill 'Em All*.

He was replaced by a more stable character, Kirk Hammett. But in Mustaine's absence the first two Metallica albums included songs he had co-written, most notably *The Four Horsemen* and *Jump In The Fire* from *Kill 'Em All*, and the title track of 1984's *Ride The Lightning*. And when Mustaine made his comeback – bringing Megadeth to the global stage in 1985 with their debut album *Killing Is My Business... And Business Is Good!* – he declared war. As he said of his former band: "I was out for blood – theirs."

In the end it was a war he could never win. For all Mustaine's unique qualities as a songwriter, guitarist and vocalist – as illustrated on classic Megadeth albums such as *Peace Sells... But Who's Buying?* (1986), *Rust In Peace* (1990) and *Countdown To Extinction* (1992) – the band's record sales of 50 million, while monumental, are nevertheless eclipsed by Metallica's 125 million. But when talking to *Classic Rock* today he prefers not to dwell on the negatives.

He speaks with pride of what he has achieved with Megadeth. He is bullish about his time in Metallica, yet magnanimous in what he says about them now. Above all else he is proud of how he has turned his life around. ➤

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**"Nobody planned on us
having the pandemic,
and I certainly didn't
plan on getting cancer."**





Dave Ellefson and Mustaine in happier times in the 1990s.

|||||

“I’d rather not talk about [David Ellefson]. This is something that’s in the rear-view mirror.”

But the spikiness of the young Dave Mustaine still remains. It’s apparent when he’s questioned about his wild years, or his recent decision to fire David Ellefson, the bassist who was a member of Megadeth for the best part of 30 years. It’s also evident in an aggressive new Megadeth album, which he has titled, in classic fashion, *The Sick, The Dying... And The Dead!*

Let’s start in the here and now, with the new album. How would you describe it?
Long overdue. It’s six years since the last one. Nobody planned on us having the pandemic, and I certainly didn’t plan on getting cancer. But I’m very happy with this album. I’m doing what I like most, and that’s playing guitar.

It’s a heavy album, with heavy themes in songs such as *Psychopathy*, *Junkie* and *Dogs Of Chernobyl*.
Right. Megadeth has songs about war, politics, the

occult, songs about life and death, a few fantasy songs, and back in the day some typical growing-up songs about fast cars and partying. But with two hundred songs, you pretty much run out of things to write about after a while!

Is there a political message in this album?
That’s not how I write. I write like a storyteller. I’m not telling people how to think. It’s up to the listener to decide for themselves. And I know that if I try too hard with lyrics, I fail. It’s like that scene in *Purple Rain* where a guy says to Prince: ‘The only one that understands your songs is yourself.’

On May 14, 2021, during the recording of the new album, you fired David Ellefson after sexually explicit videos of him were posted on Twitter. After all that you’d been

through with him, how difficult was it for you to tell him go?

I’d rather not talk about him. This is something that’s in the rear-view mirror and I have no interest in talking about it at all.

Okay, let’s move on. With Ellefson gone, you brought in Testament bassist Steve Di Giorgio to play on the album. But he’s not joining Megadeth on a permanent basis.

He would have been a great player for us to have, but the active poaching of guys from other people’s bands doesn’t sit well with me. When Metallica did that with Cliff [Burton], to get him out of the band *Trauma*, that was a real shitty feeling for me, and I never forgot that. I know I wouldn’t like it if somebody came and took one of my band members out.

Of the current Megadeth line-up, two guys have been with you for a few years: guitarist Kiko Loureiro and drummer Dirk Verbeuren. For touring you have bassist James LoMenzo, who was previously a full member of the band. So many people have been in and out of Megadeth over the years. Does it still feel like a band to you, or more like your solo project?

There’s a spirit that Megadeth has, and when we get together we all embrace that. It’s not that fans are ascribing to me, it’s what Megadeth is. Most often you can change some of the players in the band but you can’t change the voice. Look at Van Halen. I love Sammy Hagar, but for me, him being in Van Halen makes as much sense as Axl Rose being in AC/DC. It’s not how I’m used to listening to this. It’s a weird thing, changing the voice. It’s like if you take a drink of water and it’s alcohol –

not what you expected. So with Megadeth, I’m the voice, I’m the principal songwriter, but I’m certainly not ‘the band’.

Speaking of Sammy Hagar, he makes a guest appearance on your new album, playing guitar and singing on a version of his 1979 song *This Planet’s On Fire* (*Burn In Hell*).

I’ve loved Sammy’s voice ever since I heard the first Montrose album. People always talk about *Rock Candy* as the best song on that record, but my favourite was *Make It Last*. In fact, with Panic, the band I was in before Metallica, we did a couple of Montrose songs live: *Bad Motor Scooter* and *I Got The Fire*.

The other guest on the new album is Ice-T, rapping on *Night Stalker*.

We’ve been friends a long time. I played on a track of his, and now he’s on mine. He’s a good guy, but his music is very intense. When he did that song *Cop Killer* [from Body Count’s self-titled debut album in 1992], a lot of people were scared.

You yourself had a fearsome reputation in the early days of Megadeth. An angry young man, out of control.

A lot of that was a character, an on-stage persona. It was getting out there and tightening your belt





Early life of 'Death: bassist Dave Ellefson, guitarist Chris Poland, drummer Gar Samuelson, guitarist/vocalist Dave Mustaine.

and taking a swig and just screaming at whoever would listen.

But it wasn't just an act. You've said before that from an early age you carried a lot of anger inside you.

True. As a kid I didn't want to stay between the lines when I coloured. I didn't really want to colour – I wanted to burn the fucking book up! I wanted to rule the world, and as soon as I picked up a guitar that was what I wanted to do. I was beating my guitar up, doing pyrotechnics on the strings.

You've said your father was an alcoholic. Have you ever felt that your descent into alcoholism and drug addiction was in some sense pre-ordained?

I was always curious about drinking, and it tried to lure me into that abyss. There's a lot of other people from that period that didn't make it out alive, but I'm still here to tell the tale. I consider myself to be really happy. I have a wine company, and I'll sip the wine to taste it when we're doing new blends. And when my son Justis got married, it was balls-hot and I wasn't going to just sit out in the sun drinking water, man! But the days of looking for hookers to help me find some heroin in the Moulin Rouge district? Those days are over. And honestly, I don't know why you brought that up. It's kind of unfair. I mean, fuck, it's not very flattering.

You weren't shy about telling your drug stories in your autobiography ten years ago. On the contrary, you put it all out there in lurid detail.

My point is, do we want to regurgitate stuff or do we want new stuff, seeing as I'm living and breathing and I've got new things to talk about? It's your call. And however you write it, I just hope that nobody who looks up to me would read this

“The days of looking for hookers to help me find some heroin? Those days are over.”

and think that something like heroin is the answer. Because that's how I got tricked into it. Gar [Samuelson, former Megadeth drummer] told me if I wanted to be great I had to do it.

You're clearly a better role model than he was. Is that something that comes from having children?

Maybe. I just remember when Megadeth was featured in *VH-1 Behind The Music* and my son was still in school, and he came home crying because the other kids were teasing him about it. I told him: “People are gonna say stuff about your dad and you're gonna have to get used to it. Just be strong.” People said bad stuff about my dad too, and it hurt when I heard my mom say it. I would think: “Did you ever try to do an intervention on this guy?” And I don't know that they did. All I know is I wasn't allowed to see him, ever.

You've talked about music as a form of escape for you as a kid. What was it about British heavy metal that resonated so powerfully?

After what I said earlier I can't believe I'm saying this, but I was trading bags of marijuana to this girl who worked at a record store and she would give me import records, and almost everything was British. So I got Maiden, Motörhead, Budgie... And there was a rawness to it, while a lot of

American music seemed to me over-produced. There's a Budgie song where you can hear the drummer counting off on his hi-hat and they're talking in the background, and I thought: ‘That is so cool. They're right there.’ I was so sad to hear that [Budgie bassist/vocalist] Burke Shelley died this year.

In the last months of his life, Burke gave an interview to *Classic Rock* in which he spoke of his faith. “I'm not frightened of dying,” he said. “I want to spend my eternity with Jesus Christ in Heaven.”

Me even saying I have faith has created so much backlash from fans and haters. But when you tell me that Burke had faith and found peace, that makes me happy. It's weird how other people are. You think they would be happy for you. But they're not. You've just got to learn to accept that.

Did you have any doubts about going public as a Christian?

No, because it just kind of slipped out. I was talking about it matter-of-factly, like I'm talking to you now. It wasn't

something that I thought would be such a big fucking deal. If someone says they're a Catholic, nobody cares. But if you say you're a Christian it's like you've got two heads! So now I just keep it to myself. I don't tell people how to live. I've been down the paths of ➤





The current Megadeth line-up: (l-r) bassist James LoMenzo, drummer Dick Verbeuren, Mustaine, guitarist Kiko Loureiro.



Mustaine (with James Hetfield) admits his fury after leaving Metallica, but he's on good terms with the band now.

doing black magic and witchcraft, and it really fucked my life up for a very long time. But I'm happy where I'm at right now.

That interest in black magic informed a few of the early Megadeth songs. Would you be comfortable singing those songs now?

Yeah. We're going out on tour and we're playing songs off every record. There were people saying: "Dave won't play *The Conjuring* because he's this other guy now." And I'm like: "Excuse me?"

So what was it that led you to embrace Christianity at this stage?

It was really simple. I was in pretty bad shape, and I said: "What have I got to lose?" Those were the six words I said.

There's something you said in your autobiography, *Mustaine*, that seemed a bit strange...

Far be it for me to ever be called strange, right? What was it?

You said of your time in Metallica: "I was the leader of the band." That's quite a statement to make. Why?

Because the guys who founded that band, James Hetfield and Lars Ulrich, are such alpha males.

Oh no. I am clearly the alpha male between the three of us. Why did I have to do everything when I was in the band? Why did they always ask me talk to the promoters and collect the cash? Why was I the one who had to do the fighting? Why did I have to talk in between songs?

After you were kicked out of Metallica, the sense of betrayal drove you on, but the bitterness stayed with you a long time.

How can you expect a boy who's twenty and the guitar player in one of the biggest new things in the world to have a grasp on reality? Everything from that point forward was a fucking feud. Everywhere I went it was: "So, how's everything going with Meta... er, Megadeth?"

Is it difficult for you to talk about Metallica?

No. I really don't give a fuck. And you know what? I love those guys. I sent a text message to James just a couple of days ago after he'd said that he was insecure about his playing. I said: "James, I love you and I really like your playing." He didn't answer. Of course not. Why would he? The point is I wanted him to know that I've had those feelings too, but I don't now. I must remind you that when I joined Metallica, James did not play guitar.

He just picked it up and started playing when I was in the band. But let's be honest, James is one of the best metal guitar players in the world. So for him to have those feelings, that's a lie, because he's a mind-blowingly talented guy. So I just felt I needed to say something to him.

I didn't tweet it. I didn't want anybody to know what I said. But I'm telling you because, hey, you brought it up!

Have you achieved all that you dreamed of with Megadeth?

I had a plan: to be in the biggest metal band in the world. I don't know, maybe it's still ahead of me. But as far as American metal bands are concerned, there's not many bigger than Megadeth. I would say that's a great feat.

In your personal life, what are you most proud of?

Being married, successfully, for more than thirty years, and raising two great kids. I think any good parent is going to want their ceiling to be their children's floor. With my children I've been super-strict, and it's paid off. We now have two really well-adjusted adults. And for me, if you get to this age, you've done something right.

You've made it this far, but some didn't. Cliff Burton died in 1986, Gar Samuelson in 1999, and Nick Menza, another of Megadeth's drummers, in 2016. And back in 1992 you almost died of a drug overdose.

When that happened I don't know how long I was out, but I didn't see the light. Like I said earlier, you can get drawn into that abyss. Being curious is one thing. Dying from it is another.

It's coming up to forty years since you formed Megadeth, and performing this kind of music is physically demanding work. Do you feel it more now?

Sometimes it's hard. It's been eating up my hands, and there's a lot of joint damage from the head-

"Me even saying I have faith has created so much backlash from fans and haters."



banging over the years. We all have it – James [Hetfield] got it, Tom [Araya, formerly of Slayer] got it. The three of us have all had that surgery. But that's life, it changes as you get older. And it helps that I've been able to keep my personal life separate from my job. I've got a lot of friends who have nothing to do with the music world, and that's a really cool thing. And so every time I go on stage I'm able to just unload and give every single thing that I have.

In what you've said now about James Hetfield, it appears that you've made peace with many people you've fallen out with in the past.

What's the old Irish saying? If you carry a grudge you better dig two graves. I got enough stuff making me go grey. I got a daughter in her early twenties who's dating – I don't need to worry about anything else!

Looking back at your life now, do you have any regrets?

Yeah. I regret not saying goodbye to Gar. When we parted ways it was really ugly, because Gar and Chris [Poland, then Megadeth guitarist] were selling [the musical equipment] for heroin. Every time we get ready to go on the road we had to go to all the neighbourhood pawn shops to get that stuff back. So when we parted ways it was bad. And then many years later, out on tour, we went through Florida one time and I saw Gar and he looked really different – and not in a good way. His hair was super-long and his eyes were really sunken. He ended up dying from liver failure.

I wish I would have known and been able to talk to him a little bit more. It was always: "Hey, I'll call you in a couple of days." And you don't. So that's a regret for me.

That said, you seem happy with where you're at now.

Well, there's a saying we have here in Tennessee: that dog don't hunt. And there's another around here: if you're going to run with the big dogs, you need to learn how to piss in the tall grass.

But not any more?

You mean would I still do that? Given the necessity, I think I'm still capable of being like that. If I hadn't got a great new record and I wanted that cheap publicity, I could start talking shit about people and blah blah blah. But, fortunately for me, I don't need to. This new Megadeth record can stand on its own two legs.

So with you and Megadeth in good health, and your life running smoothly in a way that

few could have foreseen back in the eighties, what does the future hold for Dave Mustaine?

I would love to spend the rest of my time being available to younger bands to help them make the right decisions, whether that's telling them what I did, or what I did not do. One

way or the other, what I did is going to have a result that they're going to want or not want. I would love to be able to use all this great experience that I've got. I don't want to take it to the grave with me. My son's in management and my daughter is a singer but she doesn't play metal, so it's just going to get wasted, unless...

Unless what?

Unless I have a little red-headed grandson that plays a Flying V! You never know. 🐉

The Sick, The Dying... And The Dead! is out on September 2 via UMC, and will be reviewed next issue.

||||| "I had a plan – to be in the biggest metal band in the world. I don't know, maybe it's still ahead of me."

That's an odd expression. Can you explain how it relates to you?

Let's just say that it takes a little bit more to get me riled up nowadays. In the past, when people used to talk shit about me, I would look at who it was and I would think: "This guy is saying something and he wants me to respond because he's got a new album coming out. He wants some cheap publicity." Usually whenever I say anything, it's back at someone else. Very rarely have I started shit, you know? But someone would say something and then I'd say: "Alright, game on!"



Coronation Night

A hit film and soundtrack album, *Purple Rain* represented **Prince's** breakthrough moment. But it was the tour that followed – and one show in particular – that made him a superstar. His band the Revolution's Wendy, Lisa and Bobby Z look back...

Words: **Bill DeMain**

It's 30 March, 1985. A single low organ note rumbles in the cavernous, lighter-lit dark of the Carrier Dome, as a voice says: "Hello Syracuse and the world... my name is Prince, and I've come to play with you!"

Thousands of purple flower petals tumble from the ceiling, laser-sharp beams sweep through plumes of smoke, and the curtain rises to reveal Prince And The Revolution in comic-book-hero silhouette, kicking into the opening bars of *Let's Go Crazy*. And the fans are doing just that. Not just the 38,000 in the venue, but millions more around the world who have tuned in to one of the first ever pay-per-view concerts.

Released recently as a live album and Blu-ray, *Prince And The Revolution: Live* can still plug the members of the Revolution right back into the visceral thrill of it all.

"After not seeing it for a really long time, I thought: 'Wow, what a great band that was!'" says guitarist Wendy Melvoin. "Syracuse was a 'hit it and quit it' kind of show. Basically, we were following the contours of the movie on stage. But the full force of it is pretty evident when you watch. The energy level is on eleven the entire time, from the beginning to the very end."

"There's a kind of sweet spot when you're touring and you've been out for a couple months and you really have it down," says keyboard player Lisa Coleman. "That's what you're seeing. On top of that, it was a special occasion with its own allure, being one of the first concerts beamed worldwide."

The beginnings of the tour, and what drummer Robert 'Bobby Z' Rivkin calls "the whole *Purple Rain* era", date back to August 1983, when Prince And The Revolution played a hometown gig at the First Avenue Club in Minneapolis.

"We started recording the album right there, then moved into the movie rehearsals, then tour rehearsals," Rivkin says. "It all ran together. And there were a lot of cooks in the kitchen to make this thing as good as it could be: stage design, lighting, costumes, so many details to attend to. For Prince, who liked to move fast, it was

boldness when I say this, but there's not a person around who can stay awake as long as I can. Music is what keeps me awake. There will be times when I've been working in the studio for twenty hours and I'll be falling asleep in the chair, but I'll still be able to tell the engineer what cut I want to make."

"I loved that discipline," says Melvoin. "It made me feel like I wasn't, excuse my language, fucking around. That felt really good to take it so seriously, especially at such a young age. I was only nineteen. We videotaped every rehearsal we did. And there was a board mix of every day we rehearsed. Prince would listen back and watch and we'd make adjustments."

"It was all part of becoming a band," says Coleman. "I thought it was great having that kind of work ethic, because it really gave you such power when you're on stage when you're not having to think about

what you're playing."

Rivkin adds: "There's an old expression: 'Pain is temporary, but tape is permanent' [laughs]. Nothing in music to Prince was throwaway. Every note mattered. He couldn't stand music that wasn't informed. So these were excruciatingly worked on, labour-intensive rehearsals – they were seriously PhD courses in rock'n'roll."

When the five-piece band (including Matt Fink on keyboards and Brown Mark on bass) graduated to the opening seven-night stand at Detroit's Joe Louis Arena, they were, as Melvoin says, "a well-oiled machine". These were the first of 98 sold-out dates packed tightly into the next six months, all carried along by a convoy of 14 trucks, 10 buses, two planes and a road crew of 100. "We were a city on wheels," says Coleman. >

"Prince lived and breathed the music, and we were right there with him."

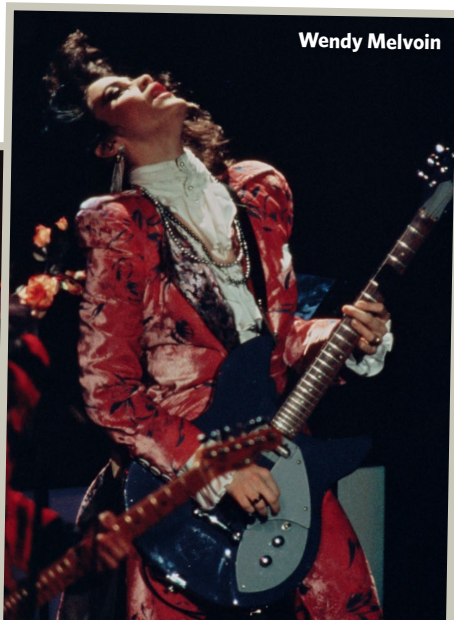
Bobby Z

frustratingly slow. But really, *Purple Rain* – the album, the movie, the tour, the whole three-year saga – became this diamond because of the pressure of time."

The all-day, all-night rehearsals for the tour were famously gruelling, with Prince setting an very high standard for stamina and "you should never have a free hand" stage presence. As he told *Rolling Stone* in 1985: "I swear to God it's not out of



Bobby Z



Wendy Melvoin



Lisa Coleman



But increasingly, Prince began to keep himself separate from his band, as he glimpsed a new level of fame that would come to rival that of Madonna, Michael Jackson and Bruce Springsteen to define the 1980s.

"The thing of Prince travelling separately really started on the 1999 tour," says Rivkin. "When he was on the same bus with us, he would put in the show tape and never stop analysing it. I remember one night he woke me up at four in the morning in my bunk and said: 'You missed a cymbal on *Delirious*.' So I told his manager: 'He's a rock star now. Get him his own bus' [laughs]. On the *Purple Rain* tour he pulled away further. Things just got more chaotic and there was less time for the camaraderie of being in the band."

"It was probably a form of self-grooming for superstardom," Melvoin reckons. "The more mysterious, more enigmatic, more untouchable one – he started acting that part. And I think his management encouraged that kind of behaviour. It's not that he didn't want to be around us. It was a direct result of being busy and reaching heights that he'd been goal-oriented towards."

But the band reconnected with their leader during the epic afternoon sound-checks that would precede every show.

"It was called 'sound-check' and I think the sound guys got a sound out of us, but we would go on for three or four hours," Coleman says with a laugh. "We would get there and just start jamming. Or Prince would already be there with a drum machine going and playing a bass, and he'd look at us to come and fall in."

The sound-checks were also a therapeutic playground for Prince, who later said that the repetition built into the tour "nearly made him have a nervous breakdown".

"His restlessness all came out in those sound-checks," says Rivkin. "He would alter certain things about the show, add new parts, even write new songs, all to keep himself from going crazy. You have to realise too that the next album, *Around The World In A Day*, was already recorded and mixed before we even started this tour. So he was already on to the next thing before we even set foot on stage."

After the sound-checks it was, as Coleman puts it: "Hurry up and get ready to get back on stage." Prince's longtime make-up artist Robin Lynch had her routine down so well that she'd sit him and the five band members down together and move from chair to chair. "She could get us all done in an hour and a half," says Melvoin.

"Normally, those kind of things take an hour and a half per person. It became second nature to her. We had four costume people who were set up in black tents on either side of the stage. You'd run off and they'd be ready to change you. It was boom-boom-boom, and off you'd go."

Once dressed, they'd assemble for an important pre-show ritual. Rivkin explains: "We'd all gather in Prince's dressing room, in a circle, and either he would speak or he would point to one of us and we would speak of the night. I can remember everybody seemed to rise to the occasion and had very inspiring words against the backdrop of twenty thousand screaming people waiting for us. There was always that final moment of



Purple Rain tour Prince And The Revolution: (l-r) Robert 'Bobby Z' Rivkin, Wendy Melvoin, Matt 'Doctor' Fink, Lisa Coleman, Prince, Brown Mark.

togetherness before we hit the stage. We didn't ever just go out there without first connecting to each other and looking in each other's eyes and Prince checking us out and us checking him out."

As you watch the Syracuse show you can feel that connection infusing every aspect of the magic on stage. The airtight snap of the grooves, the whisper-to-a-scream dynamics, the telepathic interplay between the players, the choreographed dance moves, all powered by Prince's million-watt charisma and aerobic moves.

"It was called 'sound-check', but we would go on for three or four hours."

Lisa Coleman

"Prince was our conductor," says Coleman. "We took our cues from him. He spoke a lot with his face. You had to rely on that a lot. A lot of the time he can't control it, so you learned what was pleasing to him and what frustrated him. And then he did like the ugly funky face when you did something he liked [laughs]. That was always a good high."

"I had the best seat in the house," says Rivkin. "I watched Prince like a hawk. You'd get so much from his movements – tempo, feel, groove."

Forty years later, the waves of Prince's unmatched brilliance with The Revolution can still be felt. They're present in so much pop music, from Lady Gaga to Harry Styles to Mitski. And the performances, especially from the *Purple Rain* tour, remain as benchmarks for any band that sets foot on an arena or stadium stage.

And he's ever-present in the lives of his former bandmates. Wendy Melvoin and Lisa Coleman, celebrating forty years together as a team, are currently composing music for television shows

Firefly Lane, *Cruel Summer* and *Hospital*. "We still talk about him all the time," says Melvoin. "As we're writing, we'll play something and the two of us will look at each other and go: 'Prince would've loved that.' That happens a lot."

Robert Rivkin, who remains active as a drummer and is also a curator of playlists for major streaming services, says: "He was the most important character in my life. In death, it's the same thing. He's part of my night and day dreams. And the *Purple Rain* era was a beautiful time, intense and creative. Prince lived and breathed the music, and we were right there with him." **1**

Prince And The Revolution: Live is out now on album and Blu-ray via Legacy Recordings.

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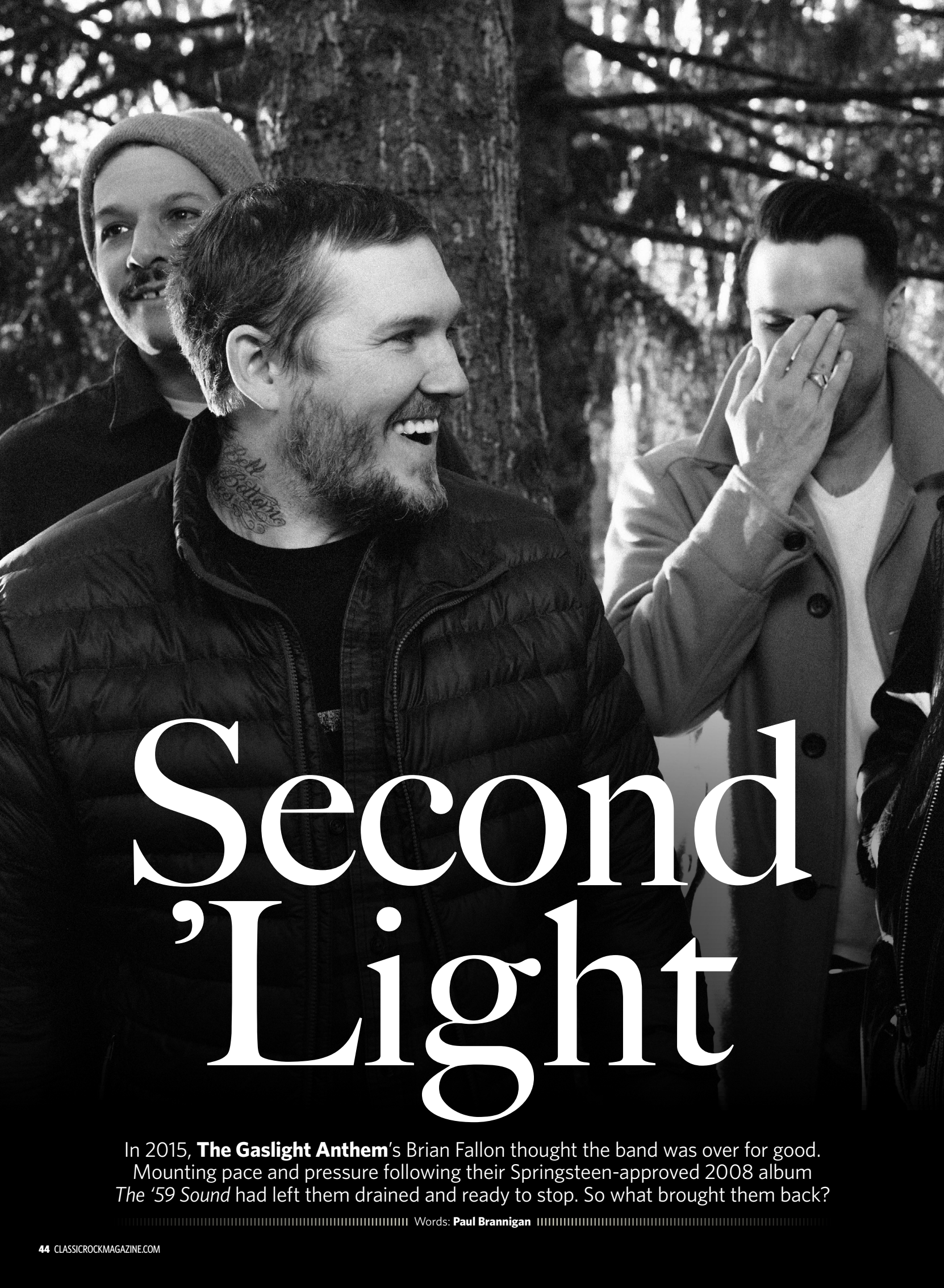
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Second 'Light

In 2015, **The Gaslight Anthem**'s Brian Fallon thought the band was over for good. Mounting pace and pressure following their Springsteen-approved 2008 album *The '59 Sound* had left them drained and ready to stop. So what brought them back?

Words: **Paul Brannigan**



It might not have been a 'hold the front page' announcement, but when The Gaslight Anthem frontman Brian Fallon revealed that the band were "returning to full-time status" in late March, not to mention beginning the process of writing songs for what will be their sixth studio album, it felt like a good-news day.

The New Jersey quartet – Fallon, guitarist Alex Rosamilia, bassist Alex Levine and drummer Benny Horowitz – had announced in July 2015 that they'd be taking an "indefinite hiatus" upon completion of touring commitments for their fifth album, 2014's *Get Hurt*. And although the four musicians had regrouped in the summer of 2018 and played a series of triumphant, victory-lap shows celebrating the tenth anniversary of *The '59 Sound*, their breakthrough album, there were no hints that this reunion might be a precursor to something more permanent.

"To be honest, we thought that was it," Fallon admits to *Classic Rock* today, in his dressing room at Manchester Apollo, during his latest solo UK tour. "When we played the last show of that run, in Asbury Park, we played *The '59 Sound* itself as the last song of the set, and I truly thought: 'Okay, this is the last time I'll ever play this song in this band again.' I never thought in a million years that we would play again, ever. And I think everybody thought the same. And we felt okay about that.

"When we went on hiatus abruptly, that was kind of an emergency 'pull the ejector seat' thing. We did it because I was really, truly at the end of my rope, and I knew I had to go home and get right, because otherwise I was going to be in trouble. At the time, management were like: 'Do you wanna do a farewell tour?' And I said: 'No, I can't do anything.' So we didn't get to finish on a high note. And that was all we wanted from that 2018 tour. That's where we thought the Gaslight Anthem story ended."

For the sake of historical accuracy, we should make clear that The Gaslight Anthem story didn't start with *The '59 Sound*... but it kinda did. The band had already delivered one album, 2007's *Sink Or Swim*, and the four-track EP *Señor And The Queen* before the August 19, 2008 release of *The '59 Sound* on SideOneDummy. Truthfully, however, the world at large had slept on those releases. What followed was something of a dream.

So perfectly realised was *The '59 Sound*, an album taking in influences from The Clash, Bruce Springsteen and The Replacements, which played out like a soulful, sepia-tinged Generation X rewrite of *Born To Run*, that this writer (then the editor of *Kerrang!*) decided to give the band their first ever cover feature after hearing just the first four songs. The cover line of the issue in question declared the young punks to be 'The Best New Band You'll Hear In 2008'.

The following summer, on June 27, as the band were about to take to the John Peel Stage at the Glastonbury festival, Bruce Springsteen walked into their trailer and asked if he could play the album's title track with them. The following day, at the Hyde Park Calling festival in London, he joined them again on the main stage. Thomas Dreux, general manager of their record label, SideOneDummy, remembers that sales of *The '59 Sound* went up by 300 to 400 per cent the following week.

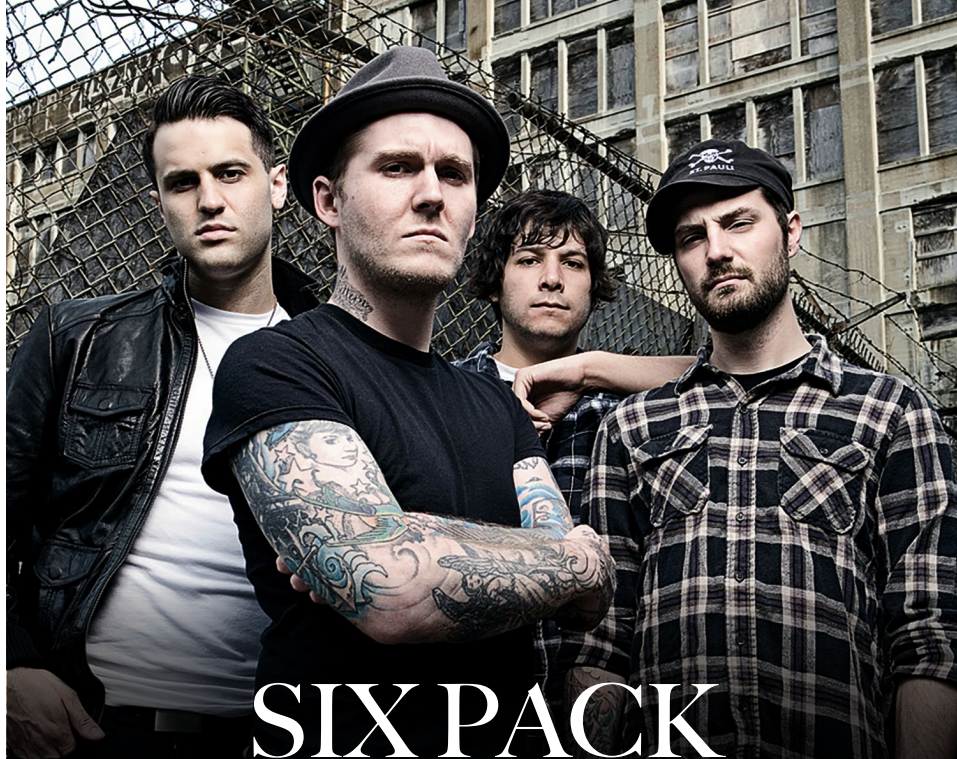
"Then it sort of exploded into a whole other thing," Brian Fallon recalled to US website *TheRinger* in 2018. "That was the moment when I said: 'Oh boy. Whatever we did before, it's gonna be different now.'"

Both *The '59 Sound* and the follow-up, 2010's *American Slang*, were certified silver for sales in excess of 60,000 copies in the UK, and The Gaslight Anthem began garnering plaudits as 'The Saviours Of Rock'n'Roll'. Although no one but his closest friends knew it at the time, Brian Fallon was already feeling the pressure, big-time.

"In 2010, when we were doing *American Slang*, I couldn't say: 'Yo, I'm having a mental breakdown, and I need a break,'" he reflects. "Because then the whole industry would have been like: 'Well, okay, then you don't have a career.'"

"If I'd said to the festival promoters: 'Look, I can't do this





SIX PACK

The very best of The Gaslight Anthem, in six killer tracks.

I'DA CALLED YOU WOODY, JOE

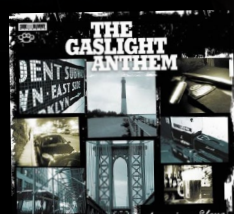
(*Sink Or Swim*, 2007)
Brian Fallon makes no bones about his Joe Strummer worship, and the highlight of TGA's debut album is this passionate, open-hearted tribute to The Clash: "The sound of the very last gang in town."

GREAT EXPECTATIONS

(*The '59 Sound*, 2008)
The opening track on the best TGA album crackles into life with the sound of a spinning vinyl disc, and explodes into a Springsteen-esque tale of regrets, hope and possibilities.

THE BACKSEAT

(*The '59 Sound*, 2008)
Arguably the definitive Gaslight Anthem er, anthem, the fabulously punchy *The Backseat* tells of young dreamers gunning their vehicle west towards 'Californian lights'. When Brian Fallon promises 'Come July we'll ride the ferris wheel, go round and round and round/And if you never let me go, well, I will never let you down' you might just feel tears prickling your eyes. We certainly do.



AMERICAN SLANG

(*American Slang*, 2010)
As the opening and title track of The Gaslight Anthem's third album, *American Slang* had to offer emphatic proof that the New Jersey soul-punks weren't one-hit wonders. 'Look what you started,' Fallon sings over waves of soaring guitars. 'I seem to be coming out of my skin.' It's the perfect reintroduction.

"45"

(*Handwritten*, 2012)
Working with producer Brendan O'Brien in Nashville seemed to bring the best out of the band, and they're cooking with gas here on album four's blasting title track. 'I can't move on and I can't stay the same,' Fallon sings at one point, foretelling existential crises to come.

GET HURT

(*Get Hurt*, 2014)
The most nakedly emotional track on 'The Divorce Album', written as Fallon's 10-year marriage crumbled to dust. While the *Get Hurt* album failed to deliver on the singer's promises of tearing up the Gaslight blueprint, its title track emerged as another masterpiece.

emotionally, I need to take a break, or I'm gonna have a problem,' people would have been like: 'Well, okay, but you're not gonna get booked next year.' We were under so much pressure, all the time. No matter how much we achieved, there were always people around us who were telling us that if we didn't do the next thing, we were done for. It sucked. As a young band, you feel like it's a miracle that you've broken through, so of course you don't want it all to go away. And at times I wasn't mentally prepared for that. I was exhausted, truly exhausted."

In the summer of 2013, a year after The Gaslight Anthem's fourth album, *Handwritten*, charted at No.2 in the UK and No.3 in the US, Fallon poured his frustrations into a note on his band's Tumblr account under the heading "Tonight You Have Broken My Heart". "We are The Gaslight Anthem,"

he wrote. "We play Gaslight Anthem songs. We're not the band you think we may be akin to. My name isn't Bruce. It's not Eddie [Vedder], or Joe [Strummer], or Paul [Westerberg] either... we aren't them and can't be them. We have to find our path, because that's the only honest thing we can do."

Fallon considered breaking up the band there and then, but was talked out of it. The following summer, when *Classic Rock* met with them in London to discuss their then recently released fifth album, *Get Hurt*, their frontman sounded at peace with Gaslight's place in the world.

"Everything from here on is wide open," he told me. "We have a past that is great, where we can play songs off the first four records for the rest of our lives and there will be people who want to hear them. And we have a future ahead of us of

change and growth, and we're not sure what form that is going to take."

A year later, though, he'd had enough.

Announcing their hiatus, the band's July 2015 statement read: "We'd like to recharge and take a step back until we have something we feel excited about rather than going right back to making a record just for the sake of making the next record. We all feel this is the best decision we can make and it feels like the right one for us."

"Things change rapidly in real time," Fallon says now. "We were all dealing with the stress of having been in a band from 2007 to 2014 and never, ever stopping. We needed to step back. I thought I'd rather the band be dead, and be happy, than keep jumping through the hoops. People used to say: 'Did they get in a fight?' But that was never it. It was that we didn't know what to do. In the past we always had a direction. I always knew like, okay, this is the new thing, we're gonna do this. And then everybody would get excited about it. But this time I didn't know where to go."

It was something of a surprise, then, when in the spring of 2016 Fallon re-emerged with his debut solo album, *Painkillers*. His subsequent solo career might not have set the world on fire, but as

"We were under so much pressure, all the time... I wasn't mentally prepared for that."

Brian Fallon

a singer-songwriter, answering only to himself, he seemed content. And he was, he insists now, save for one gnawing sense of unfinished business.

"When I finished [2020's] *Local Honey*, I remember feeling like I had finished something that I was really trying to complete. So then I was like: 'Okay, well, if I don't have anything more to do here, what do I want to do next?' And I started to think: 'Well, maybe, you know, I could write a rock record again.' And I started to look at Foo Fighters and Pearl Jam and U2 and Red Hot Chili Peppers, these bands that have many iterations and many lives, and I thought maybe there's a place for The Gaslight Anthem again."

"At one point I was thinking: 'Is rock music only for the young? Should we get out of the way?' There's beautiful young rock bands that excite me so much – Wolf Alice, Illuminati Hotties – all these young bands that are doing very cool music, and I was thinking: 'Do I still have a place?' But I think that there's also a lane for the experienced older brothers, because that's what Bruce is to me, and Pearl Jam is to me, and Foo Fighters is to me."

"There are two kinds of bands," he continues. "There are bands who have a lot of hits, and then they go out and play those hits for ever, and then there are bands who adapt and grow, and their audience grows with them."

So into which those categories do The Gaslight Anthem fall?

"I know that our audience is ready to grow some more, and they're ready to grow with us, and whatever I give them, they're going to appreciate it, as long as it comes from my heart. I thought: 'I can't ignore that, I have to see that through.'



Fallon admits he questioned whether he would ever play live again.

Because I don't feel finished yet – I don't feel like I've done my best work.”

As Fallon remembers it, there were no big heart-to-heart discussions with Alex Rosamilia, Alex Levine and Benny Horowitz about reuniting, the old friends just fell naturally back in step. And he insists that the group will approach their second act with appetites renewed, and no fears.

“Being at home throughout the pandemic, obviously everyone had nothing but time to think, and at times I would wonder whether I'd ever be able to play live shows again,” he admits. “I'd be thinking: ‘Oh man, remember when we played Ally Pally [London's 9,000-capacity Alexandra Palace] or the [17,500-capacity] PNC Arts Center in New Jersey, and you looked out and felt all the love from the people coming back at you, and you'd think this is why I wanted to be in rock'n'roll in the beginning, to make music that would affect people and lift them above their circumstances.’ And I thought: ‘You know, if I have the opportunity in this short life that we have to write music again in a big band that is truly special to people, why would I not want to do that?’”

Regarding the writing for what will be The Gaslight Anthem's sixth album, it's very early days. Today, Fallon says he and his bandmates are hoping to write around 40 songs before whittling them down to a manageable track-listing for the follow-up to *Get Hurt*.

“I don't think that we're necessarily trying to reinvent any wheels,” he states. “The idea is just to play music that we're excited about; that still is the essence of the Gaslight Anthem. I think I've had

enough distance from the band to know what the band is, and what the band is not. And I feel good about fitting back into what the band is. I don't think anyone is going to be shocked, but I think we're going to make the very best Gaslight Anthem album that we can.”

It's unlikely, then, that ‘TGA VI’ will emerge ahead of the band's return to European stages in August, on a tour that includes shows at London's Wembley Arena, Edinburgh's O2 Academy and Dublin's National Stadium. It's an ambitious undertaking, and one that speaks the band members' hunger for what lies ahead.

“I feel excited like a kid when I think about how many people want to see this band again.”

Brian Fallon

“I truly can say that I feel grateful, because I know what it feels like not to be grateful,” the singer and guitarist says quietly. “Honestly, I feel excited like a kid when I think about how many people want to see this band again. When I was in my teenage bedroom, playing my mom's broom as a guitar, I dreamt of playing venues like Wembley, so when we get there... man... my head is going to explode.”



Bruce Springsteen's request to perform with the Gaslight Anthem sent the band skyrocketing



Switching on the Gaslight again: (l to r) Alex Levine, Benny Horowitz, Alex Rosamilia, Brian Fallon.

In parting, I wonder aloud whether, in stepping back into this band, Brian Fallon might have put himself back in a 2015 headspace. How, then, is he going to be able to be at ease this next time around?

“There's always that danger,” he admits, thoughtfully. “But I think we've all learned from our mistakes, and we've learned to recognise certain warning signs before these things happen. There will be chances to say ‘Let's stop’ if we need to, if we see the same dangers coming into view. This time we have control.”

And is there a new ceiling for the erstwhile Saviours Of Rock?

“Oh, I would never say that my ambitions are small,” Fallon says, laughing. “I don't want to sound like I'm not up for a challenge. If someone tells me we have the opportunity this time around to headline the Reading and Leeds festivals, I'll say: ‘That sounds awesome.’ We're not bringing this band back to play garages.”

TGA's UK tour begins on August 18. For tickets visit www.thegaslightanthem.com

IN FROM THE COLD

Time apart allowed **H.e.a.t** to grow and their returning singer to mature sufficiently, Kenny Leckremo tells *Classic Rock*.

Words: **Polly Glass**

If Bruce Dickinson had raised a child with Animal from *The Muppets*, and fed it the *Top Gun* soundtrack, it would have been Kenny Leckremo. Bare chested and gesticulating, in bright red shorts and leather jacket, Leckremo drove this point home at Alice Cooper's Monsters Of Rock cruise back in February. Surrounded by bandmates who have been "like brothers" since their teens (they're now in their thirties), it was an intense experience.

"It was completely crazy," the H.e.a.t singer enthuses, a megawatt smile spreading across his face. "It was incredible in every way, full of emotions, chaotic, just pure happiness and joy to be back on stage with the guys. Maybe I was a little overwhelmed. I remember that feeling from when I started, you know? When I was really young."

His reaction playing the MOR cruise was understandable. Up until then, Leckremo hadn't been on stage with H.e.a.t in 12 years.

H.e.a.t had of course been on plenty of stages in that time. With peroxide Swedish Idol winner Erik Grönwall on vocals, the melodic rock quintet from Upplands Väsby (the same icy suburb as Europe) cultivated a resplendent catalogue of blistering headbangers, forging a reputation as 21st-century guardians of the most fun bits of the 80s: giant synths, gleaming riffs, Kenny Loggins, *The Final Countdown*... all of it carried forward with fresh bite. By the time their sixth album *H.e.a.t II* came out in February 2020 they seemed unstoppable.

Then it was announced that Grönwall was leaving. The split was amicable, but suddenly H.e.a.t were without their fireball frontman (he's now the singer in Skid Row).

"We were like: 'Should we keep going?'" keyboard player Jona Tee told us at the time. "Because it's a huge loss without Erik. The only option we all wanted to even try was to talk to Kenny again."

Hench, polite and alert and wearing an Iron Maiden T-shirt, Kenny Leckremo has the bright-eyed freshness of a personal trainer or primary school teacher, with a healthy glow that reflects his years living in Spain. Since leaving the band he's also had a son, and emerged on the other side of a long-term heart condition (Wolff-Parkinson-White syndrome) that was central to his departure.

For Leckremo, who met his bandmates in music college, it had dampened an otherwise joyous time working on construction sites by day, jamming and tearing up dives across Sweden (and further afield) by night after H.e.a.t formed in 2006.

"In the middle of a set my heart would just start racing," he explains. "And I mean racing. Absolutely crazy. Sometimes in the beginning of H.e.a.t I would rush off stage to lie down and just wait for this fucking thing to finish. The guys would improvise, soloing, and then I'd come back on and continue."

The condition worsened until he had it medically fixed, but by then the damage to his mental and physical health was done. In hindsight, he suggests, he could have handled it better: "I don't think I was mature enough to bounce back properly. When you're that young you're just so iron-willed, you don't want to accept that you're vulnerable in that way. Or mortal."

It all came to an end one day in 2010, at Stansted

"I'm a band guy. My band is H.e.a.t. There was never really anything else."

Kenny Leckremo



A Force to be reckoned with: H.e.a.t, with Kenny Leckremo, far right.

Airport in the UK, when Leckremo and his bandmates had the final conversation. He was out.

A low period followed, during which he moved to England with his then girlfriend and tried to figure out his next steps. For the first couple of years he "didn't want to know anything" about H.e.a.t, who flew from one success to another.

In time, though, he became a fan. "I started writing music again with Dave [Dalone, guitar]. I reconnected with the guys. Every once in a while we'd hang out and talk."

By 2017 he had completed a solo album, *Spectra*: "kinda like a therapy session, out in public". The following year, an offer to sing for a production company that put on Queen tribute shows led him to Spain, and back on to stages. He began to live a healthier lifestyle. He ran and lifted weights. Without realising it, he was preparing himself to return to H.e.a.t.



"He's been transforming himself into a rock'n'roll god, basically," Jona Tee told us, "so we asked him in the summer [of 2020] and he was like: 'I'm ready for this!'"

Today Leckremo is philosophical about the journey he's ended up taking: "It was shit having to jump the band, but they had Erik for this amazing time, and they got to grow into a completely different thing. And I had time to mature and become the person I ultimately felt like I should have been."

He's still partially based in Stockholm, where the rest of H.e.a.t live and where they made new album *Force Majeure* – a soaring, infectious theatrical splash of all they do best, with Leckremo's cries flying over the top like fireworks.

"We got back together and it didn't take long," he tells us. "We didn't discuss how the album would be like, or what name it would have. It was

just all happening automatically. And with these past couple of years, we wanted to get the album out with a sense of urgency."

For Leckremo, this urgency has to do with more than just the pandemic. Growing up in a troubled area south of Stockholm, he threw himself passionately into ice hockey and boxing. Gang fights and drugs were never far away. "Lots of my friends have passed away from drug abuse and all kinds of other things that come with that, unfortunately," he says. "And I was so desperate to get out of that."

Music became his escape. His young parents played 80s fail-safes such as Michael Jackson, Foreigner and Journey in the house. But it was Iron Maiden's debut, discovered in a friend's dad's LP collection, that changed everything. Overnight, Leckremo became a disciple of rock.

"That was *my* music," he recalls. "I discovered that, I came across it. My mind just went [makes explosion noise] and that was it."

As a drummer in music college, Leckremo would wail as he thrashed away. Eventually it was suggested that he cut to the chase and sing.

"I'm a band guy," he says. "My band is H.e.a.t and there was never really anything else. I had a few cool offers over the years [he won't tell us what], but nothing ever felt right. I always had this romantic idea that I'd be able to out-do my own shadow in what I was supposed to do."

The smile spreads again. The steep swerves of the past 12 years seem to bubble to the surface, cresting with *Force Majeure* and a diary full of gigs. This is where he wanted to be. "And here I am!"

Force Majeure is out on August 5 via earMusic. The band tour the UK in October.



LOVE STORY

After a nightmare reception to her album *The Dreaming*, who knew that three years in a barn in Kent would yield a singular, unrepeatable landmark in pop music. "I was surrounded by elemental forces," **Kate Bush** says of the album that made her a bona fide superstar.

Words: **Dave Everley**

On August 5 1985, Kate Bush made an appearance on Terry Wogan's early evening BBC1 chat show. Introduced by the avuncular host, the singer lip-synced through her new single, *Running Up That Hill (A Deal With God)*. Standing at a wooden podium, wearing what looked like a monk's cowl, and backed by a group of similarly attired musicians, she looked like a cross between a politician and a 16th-century religious leader.

Her presence on prime time TV was something of a surprise. Just a few days earlier, the NME had mentioned Bush in a piece headlined 'Where Are They Now?'. Unfortunate timing aside, you could see their point. It had been three years since the singer had last released an album, and she'd been largely absent from the spotlight since then – a lifetime away in those pre-internet days. Rumours swirled that she'd ballooned to 18 stone, or was living as a recluse in the French countryside, or both.

As the Wogan appearance proved, the rumour about her weight wasn't true. And while she had retreated from public view, it was to Kent rather than France, and she certainly hadn't been idle. What she had been doing was working on a new album, away from the eyes of both the media and her record label.

That record, which hit the shelves a month after her TV reappearance, was *Hounds Of Love*. Her fifth album, it retained the progressive spirit of her earlier career while bringing both a new maturity and a wild sense of anything-goes abandon to her work. It would be a watershed for Bush, ushering in the second act of her career, and influencing such disparate talents as Within Temptation, Bjork and The Futureheads. At the time, it sounded like nothing else around. Today, almost 40 years on, it stands as one of the most visionary records ever made.

"I love the fact that she's very happy to explore her world without worrying about compromise or what's commercial for the record company," says her long-time friend and occasional collaborator Peter Gabriel, who on the album is credited for "opening windows". "I think that's part of what people have loved about her over the years."

Ironically, it was that desire to hold the music business at arm's length that indirectly prompted Bush's self-enforced three-year break. With her

previous album, 1982's experimental and to some baffling *The Dreaming*, she had taken full creative control of her music. But the record had been a commercial failure, selling only 60,000 copies in the UK. Worse, the pressures of recording it had reportedly pushed her to the brink of nervous exhaustion. Having foresworn life on the road following her sole tour, in 1979, there were no commitments hanging over her head. She was free to step back and fade into the background.

"There was some re-evaluation, yes," she said in 1985. "Taking so long a break made me realise what was important – which was my work, much more than being famous."

Bush and bassist (and then-boyfriend) Del Palmer retreated to the farm they shared in East Wickham, on the south east fringes of London. They began constructing a 48-track home studio in a barn, and it was there, in the summer of 1983, that they began working on what would become

Hounds Of Love. The surroundings, and the absence of pressure, began to feed into the music she was creating.

"I was surrounded by elemental forces," she said. "And I was feeling really happy and positive, and considering mankind to be much better than on the last album."

The freedom of not having to answer to anyone was both a blessing

and a curse. The writing and recording process was long and often tortuous. More than once, Bush described what she was doing, and how she was doing it, as "mad".

"Work obsesses me, and everyone around is dragged into it," she later said. "It's terrible... I sometimes think I might as well just be a brain and a big pair of ears on legs, stuck in front of a mixing desk."

But being in total control had more upsides to it than it did downsides. Crucially, it allowed her to get away with things that a record company would have blocked in the past – or at least attempted to block. At the studio in East Wickham she was free to indulge her ambitions to their fullest. And *Hounds Of Love* was hugely ambitious on every level.

For starters, the album's structure was far from conventional. It was clearly divided into two distinct halves – one for each side of the original vinyl record.

Side one was relatively conventional: a set of five songs that ➤



"Taking so long a break made me realise what was important – which was my work."

Kate Bush



ostensibly stood alone but in reality were held together by a thin conceptual thread. "All the songs are linked by the fact that they're about relationships of some kind," Bush explained. "They're all love songs, really."

Of course, a Kate Bush love song is unlike anyone else's love song. *Running Up That Hill (A Deal With God)* took a unique view of the male-female relationship. "It's the two people in the song, a man and a woman, that want to make a deal with God in order to swap places with each other," she explained. "That if the man could be the woman, and vice-versa, they would understand what it's like from that other person's point of view and that perhaps there'd be less problems in the relationship."

Musically, Bush had always drawn her inspiration from outside of the pop sphere ("I have never seen a Madonna video," she said of the era's other defining female star. "I'd rather listen to Delius, Bach or Satie"). Her early folk and prog leanings had gradually been subsumed into a bigger, more baroque whole, and *Hounds Of Love* knitted together all the strands. While the darkly atmospheric opening track *Running Up That Hill* beat with a Fairlight synth heart, the title track, with its sawing cellos and relentless percussive spine, evoked a wild chase through tangled woodland. Elsewhere, double bass and didgeridoos drifted into the mix, and Greek and Irish rhythms danced cheek to cheek. Tellingly, she cited New Age record label Windham Hill and ECM Records, the latter home to acclaimed jazz guitarist Pat Metheny and German double-bass maestro Eberhard Weber, among others, as influences (Weber features on three of the album's tracks, including the stately *Mother Stands For Comfort*).

Her influences weren't just musical. *Hounds Of Love's* opening title track begins with

a sample ("It's in the trees! It's coming!") from cult 1957 horror film *Night Of The Demon*, lending it an unlikely mix of foreboding and kitsch. The album's second single, *Cloudbusting*, was even more audacious. Inspired by *Book Of Dreams*, a memoir of controversial 20th-century psychoanalyst Wilhelm Reich by his son Peter, it brought together psychology, familial

relationships and rain-making machines in four exhilarating minutes (in the memorable video for the song, Bush played Peter Reich as a child, wearing a boy's wig, while Hollywood star Donald Sutherland played Wilhelm Reich). With *The Big Sky* she treated her music like a vast painting daubed with blue and white, broken only

by the presence of a aeroplane in one of the corners (*We pause for the jet...*)

While the album's first half at least paid lip service to the traditional idea of an 'album', the second was something else entirely. An interlinked seven-song suited titled *The Ninth Wave* (named after, although confusingly not inspired by, a line from Alfred Lord Tennyson's poem

The Coming Of Arthur and also a 19th-century painting by Ivan Aivazovsky), it was Bush's grandest piece of music yet. A vivid, hallucinatory song cycle, it related the tale of a woman who is swept out to sea in a storm and spends the night fighting against the waves and the elements. Its seeds lay in a trip Bush made to Ireland as she was writing the album.

"I was writing lyrics and we were right by the sea," she said. "I love the sea. It's the energy that's so attractive – the fact that it's so huge. And war films, where people would come off the ship and be stuck in the water with no sense of where they were, or of time, like sensory deprivation. It's got to be terrifying."

The Ninth Wave extended the watery metaphor across its seven tracks, charting the progress of its helpless (continued on p55)

"I love the fact that she's very happy to explore her world without worrying about compromise."

Peter Gabriel



Kate Bush



Hounds Of Love

NEW RELEASES



LONERIDER - SUNDOWN
ESM364 - Out Now

In 2019 the debut album "Attitude" by Lonerider was released, a band that not only features Steve Overland (FM, Solo, Shadowman), Steve Morris (Heartland, Shadowman) and Chris Childs (Thunder) but legendary drummer Simon Kirke of Free and Bad Company fame. Lonerider have the feel of the classic Bad Company that we know and love, yet the songs are modern, fresh and vibrant. The new album entitled "Sundown" boasts 12 tracks of classic rock in the same vein as "Attitude", well why change a winning formula? The vinyl version is a numbered edition of 500 and to make it special it has two different tracks to the CD.



OUSEY/MANN - IS ANYBODY LISTENING
ESM366 - Out Now

When the first lockdown began in 2020 Khalil Turk of Escape Music Ltd introduced Steve Mann (Lionheart, MSG) to Chris Ousey (Heartland, Virginia Wolf) with an idea of working together. The pair set to work and quickly realised that there was a great synergy between the two of them. The resulting album "Is Anybody Listening" is a dynamic work of classic hard rock at its best and certainly stands as some of the best output that either of them have been involved with. This is a very exciting collaboration and the 13 tracks on offer here are all excellent classic melodic hard rock which fans will love from start to finish.



COMPASS - THEORY OF TIDES
ESM367 - Out 22nd July

Back in 2017 singer/songwriter Steve Newman decided to write a few songs that musically would step outside the barriers imposed by many years writing for his own band Newman. The debut "Our Time On Earth" was released through Escape (ESM 342) in 2020 to great acclaim. High on the momentum from the first album, and restricted to only studio work due to the pandemic Steve set about constructing songs within a concept for the second album. Compass are very proud to introduce "Theory Of Tides" a concept album based on the life, works, and inner turmoil of the famous astronomer and scientist Galileo Galilei.

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“Work obsesses me and everyone around is dragged into it. It’s terrible.”

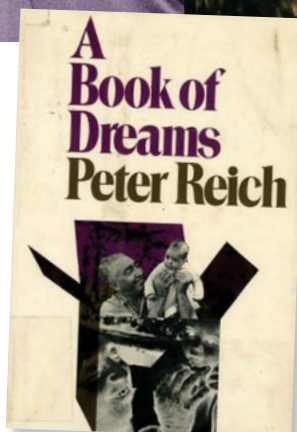
Kate Bush



protagonist, from the woozy *And Dream Of Sheep*, in which the woman is drawn into the sea, to the redemptive *The Morning Fog*, which ended both the suite and the album on an optimistic note. The result was part cinematic extravaganza, part moving piece of art, all loaded with metaphors for what Bush described as “a very deep inner experience”.

While she touched on subjects she’d covered before – the male perception of the female psyche on *Waking The Witch*; the closeness and distance of family on *Watching You Without Me*; environmental concerns on *Hello Earth* – nowhere did it feel like she was retreading old ground. She also dug deep into her address book and enlisted the talents of ex-Pentangle bassist Danny Thompson, *Comic Strip* actor Robbie Coltrane (who provided one of the many voices on *Waking The Witch*) and, on the exuberant *Jig Of Life*, respected Irish folk musicians Dónal Lunny, Liam Flynn and John Sheahan, plus her brother, poet John Carder Bush, who lent weighty narration to the track. The *Ninth Wave*, like the album as a whole, was typical Kate Bush – worldly-wise and childlike at the same time.

“Maybe bits of me don’t want to grow up,” she said in 1985, shortly



after the album’s release. “Maybe I am an escapist, a romantic. I dislike cynicism. It’s bad energy. Does that make me childlike?”

Hounds Of Love was released on September 16, 1985. It entered the UK chart at No.1, displacing Madonna’s *Like A Virgin* and putting Bush squarely back in the public eye. In an era where MTV-fuelled pop ruled, the success of such an unashamedly progressive, unarguably intelligent album felt like a momentous achievement.

After *Hounds Of Love*, the length of time between her albums lengthened – it would be four years before her next record, 1989’s *The Sensual World*, and 12 between 1993’s *The Red Shoes* and her 2005 comeback *Aerial*. Neither the lengthy gaps between records nor the records themselves would have been possible without *Hounds Of Love*. Nearly four decades on, it remains Kate Bush’s defining artistic statement, and one of the most visionary albums ever made.

“She’s a great artist, and *Hounds Of Love* showed that she’s capable of making wonderful things,” says Peter Gabriel. “It’s still sounds timeless.”

A DEAL WITH GOD

Running Up That Hill, Kate Bush's hallmark anthem from *Hounds Of Love*, helped to revitalise her career back in 1985. Now it has been given new life 2022 by the Netflix series *Stranger Things*.

Words: **Chris Roberts**

You'd have to be living under a planet-sized mountain of Jubilee bunting not to have heard that Kate Bush's 1985 single *Running Up That Hill* has made an extraordinary comeback in recent weeks, topping the Spotify and iTunes charts and winning the approval of a new generation. This resurgent popularity has been chiefly – okay, totally – initiated by the track's key placement in Season Four of the Netflix sci-fi-horror hybrid and teen favourite *Stranger Things*, set in the 80s and frequently giving fresh legs to cult-ish hits of the era. The same season dusts off and delivers new oxygen to Talking Heads' *Psycho Killer*, Dead Or Alive's *You Spin Me Round* and The Cramps' *I Was A Teenage Werewolf*.

Yet 37 years after *Running Up That Hill* initially reached No.3 in the UK (her second-biggest hit, after her 1978 debut *Wuthering Heights*), it seems to have snowballed beyond that tie-in success and is encouraging many young viewers to investigate her back catalogue and embrace the worlds of albums such as 1985's *Hounds Of Love* (*Running Up That Hill*'s parent album), *The Kick Inside* (1978), *The Dreaming* (1982), *The Sensual World* (1989) and *The Red Shoes* (1993). When Bush made her first live appearances for 35 years, at a Hammersmith Apollo residency in 2014, her albums made a return to prominence, taking up lofty positions in the charts. It's plausible that *Running Up That Hill*'s revival will start a wave of interest in all things Kate.

At the time of its release, the *Hounds Of Love* album prompted something of a change of fortune for Bush, as its predecessor, *The Dreaming*,

hadn't sold too well. *Hounds Of Love*, on the other hand, gained rave reviews, the No.1 spot in the UK, a respectable showing in the US, and passed a million sales by 1998. Bush was in love with the Fairlight CMI synthesiser/sampler and, after recording her demos, spent more than a year on overdubs, mixing and tweaking. The result was effectively two mini-albums, with Side One the 'pop' side (albeit art-pop), and Side Two an unapologetic prog concept suite about a woman drifting alone at sea at night.

Running Up That Hill opens Side One, which also includes *Hounds Of Love*'s equally dramatic title track, *The Big Sky* and *Cloudbusting*, which was her label EMI's preferred choice as lead single. Bush insisted on *Running Up That Hill*, as she deemed it more representative of the album's direction. Another factor that had unnerved the label was the song's original title, *A Deal With God*. On that issue, she gave way. (As

a teenager she might have persuaded the label to release *Wuthering Heights* – not their choice – by bursting into tears, but now, surrounded by a supportive family and business framework, she was savvier regarding which battles to choose.)

"For me, *A Deal With God* is the title", she told Q in 1989. "But I was told that if I insisted, the radio stations in at least ten countries would refuse to play it – Spain, Italy, America, lots. I thought that was ridiculous. Still, especially after *The Dreaming*, I decided to weigh up priorities. Not to compromise creatively, but to not be so obsessive that I cut my own throat... I had to give the album a chance, I had to be grown up about this".

The song was about a man and a woman, with God as a secondary character.

"I was trying to say that a man and woman can't really understand each other because we are a man and a woman," she told Richard Skinner on Radio 1. "And if we could swap our roles, be in each other's place for a while, I think we'd be very surprised! It would lead to greater understanding. I thought the only way it could be done was, you know, a deal with the devil. And then I thought, well no, why not a deal with God? Because that's so much more powerful."



Max Mayfield in that scene in *Stranger Things* Season 4.



“For me, *A Deal With God* is the title, but I was told that if I insisted, the radio stations in at least ten countries would refuse to play it.”

Kate Bush

With its of-its-time interpretive dance video and a memorably incongruous showing on British 80s TV staple *Wogan*, the single took off and rebooted Bush's career, allowing the album to loosen the reins and release its hounds. (That year, *NME* awarded it third-best track of the year, behind two Jesus And Mary Chain toe-tappers.) And while artists including Placebo, First Aid Kit and Chromatics have concocted cover versions, none come close to the original's rhythmic intensity – a blend of LinnDrum programming from Del Palmer and the drumming of Stuart Elliott, who'd worked with Cockney Rebel and Al Stewart and on all Bush's albums up to that point. “He's so easy to work with because he knows what I'm like”, Bush enthused. Kate's brother Paddy's balalaika is there too, subliminally shading in the arresting atmospherics. That bridge – ‘Come on baby, come on darling... let's exchange the experience’ – remains thrilling.

This isn't, of course, the first time a profile in a film or TV show has revitalised a song, and neither is it the first time *Running Up That Hill* has enjoyed a resurrection. Back in '86 it was the theme tune for a BBC kids' drama, *Running Scared*, and more recently it has featured in the US TV drama *Pose*. In truth, as a beloved pop classic, it's never fully been away – there was no special fanfare when it popped up in shows such as *The O.C.*, *Bones* and *C.S.I. Crime Scene Investigation*. And a decade ago, with Bush having re-recorded her vocals, it was prominent at the London Summer Olympics closing ceremony. Yet *Stranger Things* inspires fan devotion, and those fans seem happy to point their devotion in Kate Bush's direction, just as music fans did in the 80s. *Running Up That Hill*, and Bush's catalogue in general, will run and run. Immortally? Stranger things have happened. 📻



Last month, various members of Team CR watched Robert Plant and Alison Krauss at Hyde Park's British Summer Time festival. Unsurprisingly, their performance was a glorious thing to see (one of those sublime, butter-and-honey pairings that felt rich and light at the same time). It also shone a light on the power of great homaging. Old songs given new life. Classic sounds reimagined.

Rock'n'roll is often called out for this sort of thing, with fans and non-fans declaring it a spent force (quite apart from Gene Simmons' disproportionately repeated "rock is dead" quote). But using this as a criticism in itself misses the point. P&K's set was comprised entirely of covers, and it felt anything *but* spent.

Original material built on nostalgia can be dreadful, or it can be wonderful. There's always life in existing ideas, if you know where to look and how to treat them. Ultimately it all comes down to one question: is it a good song?

This month's Hot List includes some quality examples of rock mixology; classic tropes poured into a cocktail shaker and served with a twist, or played straight. There's a surprising Elvis cover from Eurovision winners-turned-global superstars Måneskin; blues rock with glam bootprints from Troy Redfern; a cocksure paean to Van Halen from rising Canadian trio Deraps; and more.

Check out more new music like this at Classic Rock's Tracks of the Week (and vote for your favourite) at classicrockmagazine.com

Måneskin

If I Can Dream

Taken from the soundtrack of Baz Luhrmann's new Elvis movie, Måneskin's cover of Presley's 1968 classic is, quite frankly, astonishing. The original was one of The King's greatest performances, a tour-de-force triumph, with full orchestra and choir gradually winding up to an exultant, emotional climax. Måneskin's version is the opposite, with the instrumentation stripped back to the very basics, but such is the force of Damiano David's vocals that the band's cover retains all of the dramatic impact of the original.

facebook.com/maneskinofficial

Troy Redfern *Come On*

There's a dirty smokiness to Troy Redfern's voice that, mixed with feral slide guitar chops, lends gratifying elements of mania and mystique to his brand of blues rock. We reckon *Come On* is his finest moment yet, a track spiced with bold, stompy flavours of T.Rex – if Marc Bolan had swapped the feather boas for biker leathers and a few more cigarettes. Check out this and more on his upcoming new album *The Wings Of Salvation*, which is released on September 23.

troyredfern.com



Mr Shiraz *Labracore*

British groove punks Mr Shiraz are the masterminds behind this driving dive-bomb that makes us think of Green Day taking tips from Faith No More – and dogs, both for the Labrador-like energy and the name of this track that we're rather enjoying. "This album is a celebration of love," the band say, "of friendship, of remaining positive, that no matter what happens, we've got this as long as we stick together... and there is also a song about a boy that turns into a dog." The aforementioned album, titled *Glorious*, is out now.

mrshiraz.bandcamp.com



Deraps *My Side Of Town*

This young Canadian-Australian trio have released one of the most fun rock debuts you'll hear this year, from which this is taken. Yes, you could say it's extremely derivative, and strictly speaking that would be true. But that's like having a problem with Airbourne for sounding like AC/DC, or Greta Van Fleet for emulating Led Zeppelin. And when the main inspiration is golden-age Van Halen and it's delivered with such confidence and pizzazz – it's hard to object too strongly.

derapsofficial.com

Amanda Shires

Hawk For The Dove

There's a mystique that unfolds, like billowing black smoke, from this piece of Shires's new solo album *Take It Like A Man*. A beautifully dark, sensual swirl of roots, alt.rock and outlaw qualities, building up to the sort of angular violin that isn't immediately violin-like it comes across as intelligent and effortlessly easy on the-ear. It's easy to see how she and husband Jason Isbell are a great musical match (you can find Shires's voice and strings on Isbell's records, and he contributes guitar parts to some of her albums). amandashiresmusic.com



Welshly Arms

Dangerous

If you're a fan of commanding, cool yet catchy young guns like The Glorious Sons and Highly Suspect, then you really ought to give this new single from Cleveland rockers Welshly Arms a spin. Brimming with swaggering urgency but still light and bright enough to dance to, it has a backbone of thick, toe-tapping beats, fleshed out with soul, pop and blues-rock layers. Like Royal Blood's disco-friendly last album, *Typhoons*, it has feet in the electronic and old-school rock fields – a contemporary body with an organic heart. They tour the UK in October. welshlyarms.com

Hot Breath

Feeling 'Bout This

Rock bands and songs about bonking have been synonymous with one another since forever. Swedish foursome Hot Breath are among the latest to continue this noble tradition, armed with galloping drums, horn-dog lyrics, and jutting guitars that chop through the air like randy, caffeinated axes. The end result is an urgent, high-voltage blast of sex, sweaty dancing and garage rock'n'roll – complete with bananas and glittery lipstick in the video for a healthy ratio of silliness-versus-sexiness.

hotbreathofficial.bandcamp.com



Whiskey Myers

The Wolf

ZZ Top fans, take note: there's not just one lil' old band from Texas in town. Indeed, while Whiskey Myers are cut from a newer kind of southern cloth, you can definitely hear the desert sand and spit n' sawdust guitars of Gibbons and co on *The Wolf*. For added va-va-voom it comes spliced with fat horns – a driving ingredient across their game-raising new album, *Tornillo* (instigated after they came upon a visiting mariachi group). It all comes together in a grizzled yet rich, soulful tale of battle scars, blue collar trials and don't-fuck-with-me intent.

whiskeymyers.com



Communication Breakdown

Send your letters to Communication Breakdown, *Classic Rock*, Future, 121-141 Westbourne Terrace, Paddington, London W2 6JR or email them to classicrock@futurenet.com For more comment visit classicrockmagazine.com or find us on Facebook, Twitter or Instagram.

MISSING MILLER?

I have been a total music nut since I turned 12 in the early 1980s, and somehow I only just discovered Frankie Miller last year. I saw some reviews of his reissued albums in *Classic Rock*, and dialled up a Frankie Miller playlist on YouTube and was instantly hooked! I ordered a box set of the albums he recorded for Chrysalis Records called *Frankie Miller... That's Who* and have bought every album I could find by him since. I watched a documentary about him on YouTube and another that came as a bonus DVD with the *Double Take* album. Such a sad fate for such an incredible talent.

I've been a sporadic reader of your magazine for many years (sporadic because the only place to buy it here in Upstate New York has always been the local Barnes & Noble... sometimes they would have the latest issue, sometimes not). After missing five months' worth of issues because of covid, I finally got smart and bought a subscription.

Anyway, I have never seen a feature on Frankie Miller in *Classic Rock* although I'm betting you've written about him in the past. For those of us who don't own every issue, could you please consider running a new article on him in some capacity? Buyers Guide, Q&A, Six Things You Need To Know About... anything would be greatly appreciated.

One last thought. In the March issue, for the 10 worst cover songs feature I think Rod Stewart's ill-advised synth-pop version of *All Right Now* is about the biggest steaming pile of crap I have ever heard in my life. And I love Rod's voice!

Scott Hayes, Upstate New York

DYLAN UNDER COVER

Y'all. Interesting bits, particularly on how Dylan looked at his songs (March issue). However, I had a feeling that *Classic Rock* would only dig into the big-name covers (Hendrix, Harrison, Byrds et al) and might ignore some truly great Dylan covers. I submit to you maybe the best of all: Jason & The Scorchers' *Absolutely Sweet Marie*.

Jim Rauh, Santa Clara, CA, USA

THE ODD COUPLE?

I think I must mention security at the Albert Hall, Wednesday 31 May for the Jeff Beck concert. Some 'want to be Izzy Stradlin, who wanted to be Keith Richards' lookalike managed to get on stage and massacre six songs. Why it took six songs

to get him off stage I will never know. "What's going on" indeed.

Anyway, he must have escaped, as he got back on the stage for the encore. Fortunately, a quick-minded sound technician turned the microphones off before he could ruin *A Day In The Life*.

John Kavanagh, via email

You weren't a fan of Johnny Depp's appearance with Jeff then, eh John? Funnily enough, our reviewer thought along not dissimilar lines last issue.

THINK GLOBAL, ACT LOCAL

I think Dave Jordan's idea of a piece about small live venues [Letters, CR 302] is great and I'd like to suggest The Red Lion (Leo's) in Northfleet. Terry Lee has been putting great bands on there for around 40 years – I virtually lived in the place in the early 80s. The staff are friendly, the atmosphere is great and even the beer is good. There's a mixture of established, new and covers bands; something for everyone.

On a related note, I see a lot of venues that sell out completely for covers bands, but struggle to cover costs for unknown bands. If we don't support the new bands, venues won't be able to afford to put them on and we will lose something special that will never come back. I urge all *Classic Rock* readers to make sure they see at least one new band a month – you never know, they could be your new favourite band.

Chris Wooding, via email

Great letter in issue 302. Check out the Duck And Drake in Leeds. What a fantastic venue, classic small real ale



pub, live music most nights of the week, from covers to original material bands. Go and see how many of the rock and blues stars that are painted fantastically on the walls you can name.

Will not hold more than perhaps 100-150 at a push... literally, but what a breeding ground for bands. To me this is what music is about, and whilst I still do the big outdoor events and arenas, this has to be the type of venue that real lovers of music get high on.

And to make it better still, it's free... just chuck some cash in the bucket when the staff come around asking for contributions for the band... Rock'n'roll at its best.

Richard Clark, via email

We've had a great response bigging up local venues. Keep 'em coming. And keep supporting 'em!

X MARKS THE SPOT

Love your magazine but I have only just noticed an anomaly – you are not showing the details in your tour guide of the upcoming return to our shores of the mighty Kings X. They arrive in September for a series of dates across the UK and need and deserve all the publicity they can get. Any reason they are not listed?

Ian T, via email

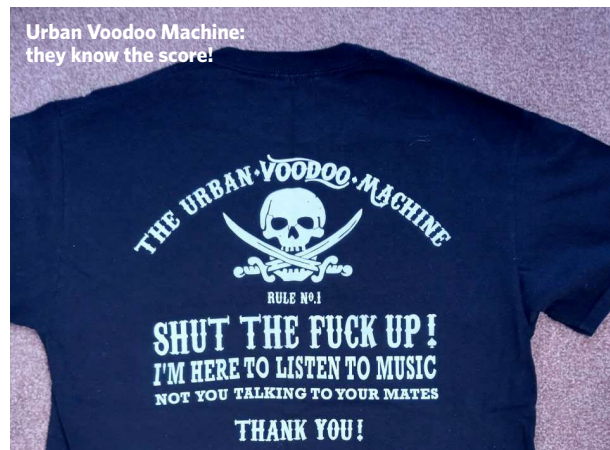
Nothing nefarious, I promise. The only reason is that there are far too many tours announced and we're unable to list them all in the pages available. They're in this issue. And you might wanna keep an eye out in next month too – there might be more than just a tour-date mention...

INANE CHATTER SOLVED

I sympathise with your reviewer Morat, in issue 302, whose article about The Hu gig in Las Vegas lamented about "the inane chatter of people who haven't got the decency to shut up while a band is playing". I too have experienced this many a time in the UK.

However I was glad to see that the Urban Voodoo Machine agrees and produced a T-shirt that I immediately bought [see photo, left]. Perhaps you should send one to Morat!

Phil Knight, Worthing



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CLASSIC ROCK RATINGS

■■■■■■■■■■	A CLASSIC
■■■■■■■■■	EXCELLENT
■■■■■■■■	VERY GOOD
■■■■■■■	GOOD
■■■■■■	ABOVE AVERAGE
■■■■■	AVERAGE
■■■■	BELOW PAR
■■■	A DISAPPOINTMENT
■■	PANTS
■	PISH

EDITED BY IAN FORTNAM

14 PAGES

100% ROCK

THE HARD STUFF

The Ultimate
ROCK REVIEWS
Section

INGREDIENTS:

P **66** ALBUMS

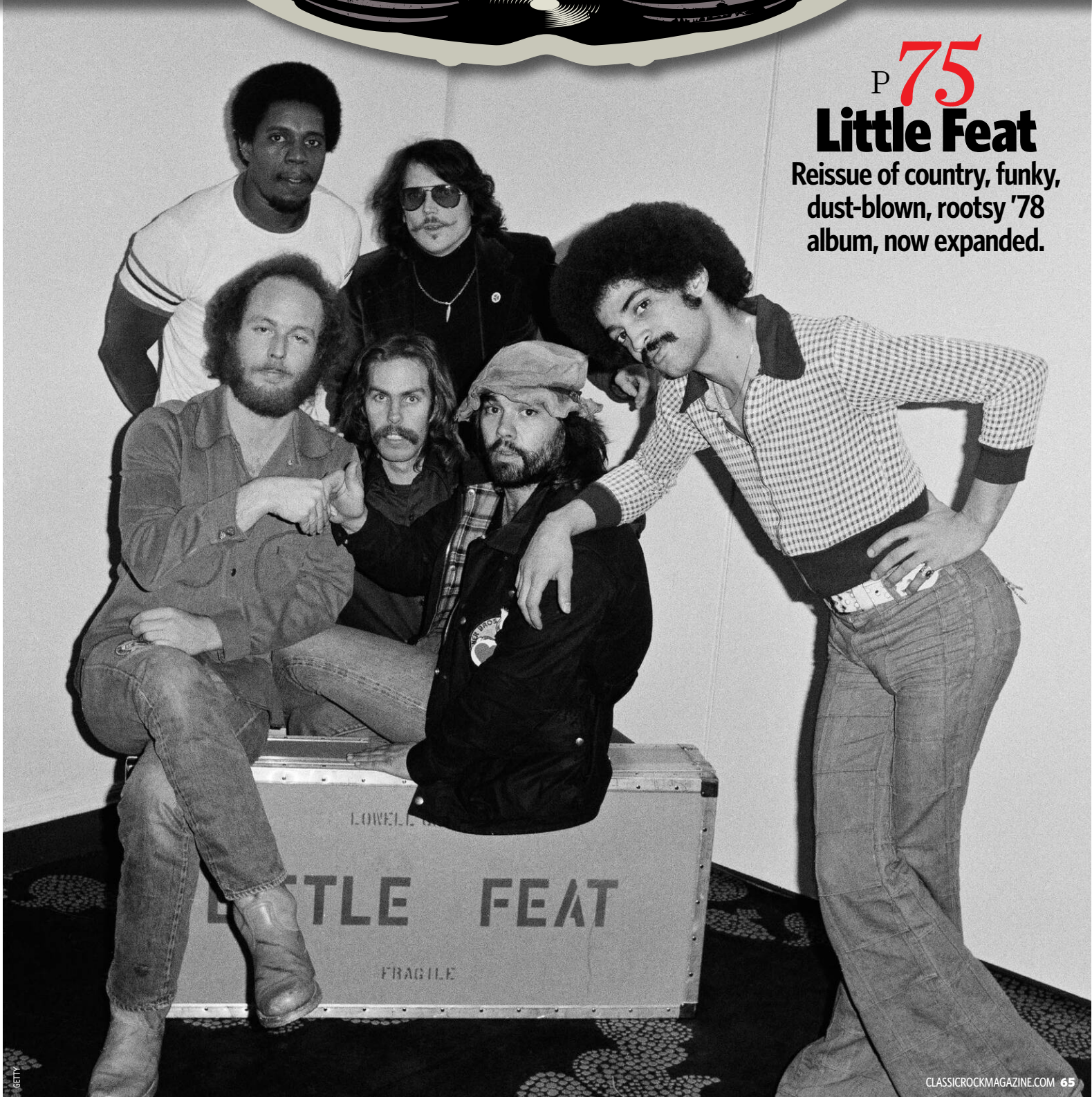
P **74** REISSUES

P **76** DVDs & BOOKS

P **80** BUYER'S GUIDE

P **75**
Little Feat

Reissue of country, funky,
dust-blown, rootsy '78
album, now expanded.



THE HARD STUFF ALBUMS



Anthrax

XL NUCLEAR BLAST

Pioneer thrashers deliver pandemic-defying 40th-anniversary livestream.



The prospect of the band turning 40 in the middle of the pandemic must have caused more than a little consternation at Anthrax Towers. After all, the only way to do a momentous anniversary justice is to embark on a world tour. However, with gigs off the menu Scott Ian and co. had to think up other ways of marking their four decades of delivering the metal thrashing goods.

The celebrations began in May last year, culminating in a global livestream on July 16/17 during which the band pummelled their way through two hours-plus of fan-pleasing songs from the soundstage at The Den in Los Angeles, the recording of which very much lives up to its concise title. Everything about XL is huge. Here we have three discs: two CDs comprising the entire livestream plus three encore bonus songs, and a Blu-ray of the performance including the bonus songs, along with previously unseen rehearsal footage and Scott Ian providing an NYC walking tour of locations that are significant to the history of Anthrax. That's around 40 minutes of extra stuff to watch. Not bad.

The livestream might have taken place in front of just a handful of crew, but the unadulterated eruptive immensity of the performance is undiminished – the band play like they're lives depend on it, singer Joey Belladonna and bassist Frank Bello,

bass slung low, in the zone up front, and the veins popping out on Scott Ian's forehead as the classic riffs just keep on coming. Speaking of which, with the focus solely on Belladonna-fronted material (mostly from *Among The Living* and *Spreading The Disease*, natch) there are too many standout cuts to mention, and newer songs such as *Evil Twin* and *Blood Eagle Wings* hold their own against classics such as *Caught In a Mosh* and *AIR. Bring The Noise*, featuring special guest Chuck D, is especially exhilarating, as are the excellent encore bonus songs *Breathing Lightning*, *Efilnikufesin* (NFL) and *Discharge* cover *Protest And Survive*.

Of the other bonus material, the previously unseen rehearsal footage is not something you're ever likely to revisit, while Ian's Anthrax-history walk around New York City is far more fun, taking in locations including the Megaforce Records offices (seeking out original 24-track album tapes and collectible bourbon), the legendary club CBGB (now a clothing store), Joe's Pizza (famed for many a post-gig pit stop), Electric Lady Studios and Madison Square Garden.

With Anthrax's anniversary touring plans now back on track, XL is a timely reaffirmation of their legendary status.



Essi Berelian

The Cruel Intentions

Venomous Anonymous

INDIE RECORDINGS

Party hearty second album from Scandi-American sleaze rockers.



Four years is a long time for a band so focused on immediate

thrills to take to make their second album, but global events rather pressed 'pause' on everyone's fun. Yet it doesn't dull the impact of these Norwegian/Swedish LA-lovers' follow-up to their 2018 debut *No Sign Of Relief*.

The title track is a particularly powerful blast of Cathouse-era glam-metal, and while hints of thrash introduce *Reaper* it's only a preamble before a big, fat, 'woah-oh-oh'-backed chorus is broken out, and from there their hunger for mic-in-the-air anthemics is serviced repeatedly. *Sunrise Over Sunset* resembles Bryan Adams on a crack bender as it eulogises the titular thoroughfare, but while the melodic strokes are broad, they retain a fierce punk edge. *Chemical Vacation* is a particularly roaring tale of seeking refuge from too much of a good time, but you suspect they protest too much; they clearly can't get enough.



Johnny Sharp

Danny Beardsley

Chase The Sun

DANNYBEARDSLEY.COM

The riff remains the same.



There's no doubting Danny Beardsley's prowess as

a guitarist and singer-songwriter. A member of Midlands-based progressive instrumental trio The Parallax Method, this is his second solo album.

He excels at fierce, staccato riffs wrapped around powerful vocals and brief, cutting solos. Stand-out tracks are *Pulling Me Under*, and *Lonely Mile* with its thoughtful acoustic intro and neat vocal harmonies. But while he generally tries a different intro, he soon reverts to the same riffing style, which can become monotonous. And just when you think he is going to break out, as with the reggae beat he brings to *Reap What You Sow*, he's back to the solid riffs for the chorus, which is jarring. And recording the songs at the

same level with little variation in tone – instrumentally and vocally – reduces their impact after a while. Beardsley needs another pair of ears in the studio, making suggestions.

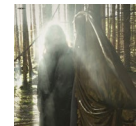


Hugh Fielder

Motorpsycho

Ancient Astronauts STICKMAN

Expansive, experimental live-in-the-studio masterwork.



Trondheim's Motorpsycho have been making eye-popping music

since the 90s, with each album or EP more expressive than the last. It's hard to convey the enormity of their mix of prog and psychedelic rock, although something like 2016's *Here Be Monsters* is probably as good a place as any to start if you're looking to have your metaphorical lid flipped.

Ancient Astronauts is a lockdown album like no other. It was originally devised in part for a piece by the Impure Dance Company, a few songs from which became the springboard for the AA album. The album comprises only four songs, one of which clocks in at 2:14 and another at 22:22, and it's magnificent, from full-blown fuzz-pedal rock monster to drones and shimmering interplay, highs and stupefying lows. As the PR says: "An explorative album without a whole lot of choruses."



Philip Wilding

Mickey Jupp

Up Snakes, Down Ladders

CONQUEST MUSIC

The greatest English rock'n'roller goes cross-country.



Typesetting Mickey Jupp as Southend's answer to Chuck Berry

don't get you a ride on Rage. Back in the 70s, even Lee Brilleaux from Dr Feelgood kneeled before him. Jupp offloaded the classic *Legend* albums, the famous *Flaming Red Boot* produced by Tony Visconti demanding attention. Ignored, Jupp went into semi-retirement in the Lake District.

He's been coaxed out by these home recordings, on which Lee Dorsey and Tom T Hall influences rub alongside Jerry Lee Lewis, Waylon 'n' Willie and such. Bar-room adultery (*Like You Don't Love Him*) and

unrequited love songs (*Loving The Wrong Girl*) are all over the piece, but *The Ballad of Tutford Darnell* (anag: Dartford Tunnel) is the charm. The atypical *Pilot*, recorded circa 1972, is like Joan Armatrading with a 99 and double flake.

Not a wasted word nor a pointless chord. Mickey Jupp is a total original.



Max Bell

Marc Valentine

Future Obscure ARCADE FIRES

Endlessly melodic solo album that feels like a greatest-hits collection.



As frontman with 90s nearly-rans Last Great Dreamers, Marc Valentine never really broke through to connect with the wider audience that he and his glammed-up buddies sought to reach. It certainly wasn't for trying, but half the luck in making it as a rock star is in the timing, which explains why the clash of polka dots and scarves against parkas and sportswear didn't always work in his favour.

But with the passing of time comes a sense of acceptance. By kicking back, Marc Valentine has released a solo album that's simultaneously touching and gloriously rambunctious. The touchstone is still fuzzed-up rock'n'roll, but here it's shot

through with a sense of nostalgia and what might have been. Crucially, there's no bitterness or regret. The air-punching *Mornington Avenue* looks back through misty eyes, while *Break My Heart Anyway* is an anthem for eternal romantics everywhere, and joins these gems in a jewel case.



Julian Marszalek

Cinema Stereo

Cinema Stereo SELF-RELEASED

Exuberant, cleverly crafted Technicolor pop-rock.



Formed during the pandemic, this trio from Florida sound amazingly accomplished considering their short existence. Imbued with the spirit of ELO, Cheap Trick and Queen, and playfully creative like Jellyfish, the amount of detail and care that's gone into tunes like orchestral break-up song *No More* and *Lady In Red Pt 1*, which starts off like Crüe's *Home Sweet Home* and travels via a Beatles string arrangement to an epic guitar solo, is hugely impressive. By contrast, *Lady In Red Pt 2* focuses on rocking out, as does the blues-rock driven *The Wine Song*. Top of the pop-rock pile, though, are *Ride This Thing Out* and the excellent *No One Needs Your Love (Like I Do)*, which wouldn't have been out of place

as hit singles blasting out of transistor radios on sunny beaches circa 1977.

A debut this packed with good stuff surely points to a great future for Cinema Stereo.

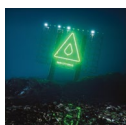


Essi Berelian

Rain City Drive

Rain City Drive THRILLER

New name, new beginning for pop-rockers formerly known as Slaves.



The choice of record label couldn't be more fitting, because *Waiting On You*, the opener on Rain City Drive's debut album under their new name (they changed it from Slaves after the internet pointed out that their original moniker was a little problematic) sounds exactly like what would have happened if mid-90s Michael Jackson had fronted Linkin Park.

This is pop-rock with the emphasis on the pop, a collection of blemish-free, smooth-edged radio anthems that gleam like the wings of a freshly washed DeLorian. There's plenty of emo-flavoured soul baring and shirt-rendering – 'I'm fucked up enough for the both of us,' new frontman (and *The Voice* runner-up) Matt McAndrew informs his beloved on the hip-hop tinged *Psycho*, an admission he should probably

leave off his Tinder profile. But at heart this is unashamedly big-business, by-committee radio rock, and every bit as catchy as that position in the musical world demands.

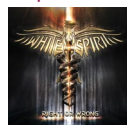


Emma Johnston

White Spirit

Right Or Wrong ONQUEST MUSIC

Turps versus Purps.



White Spirit were one of the New Wave Of British Heavy Metal's most retro-sounding bands: more Purple than Pentagram, more Heep than Hellhammer. The Hartlepool group – famed for having included pre-Iron Maiden guitarist Janick Gers – released a single, self-titled album for MCA in 1980, then split while recording the follow-up with new singer Brian Howe.

The tapes for album number two, recently rediscovered, form the backbone of *Right Or Wrong*. Much re-recording and the employment of guest singers was required to bring the sonics up to scratch, but the results are impressive. Full of 80s-style pomp'n'roll, swaggering songs such as *Runaway*, *Wait A Little Longer* and *Holy Water* (with Steve Overland on vocals) would likely have been staples of the *Friday Rock Show* back in the day. Despite Howe's sporadic presence, *Right Or Wrong* also

serves as a fine tribute to the frontman who died in 2020 after storied stints with Ted Nugent and Bad Company.



Geoff Barton

Vanderwolf

12 Little Killers PROPER

Solo debut from former Last Man Standing singer/Meltdown Festival producer.



When Last Man Standing split during a traumatic 2012 tour of Russia, gravel-voiced singer Max Vanderwolf became Glenn Max and began a back-room career producing live events, while intermittently continuing to write. Finally getting his act together, *12 Little Killers* is a dozen songs written between 2002 and 2018, newly recorded.

From the moment *I Am Not A Mountain* opens proceedings like *The Jam* in acoustic mode, it's a varied, vivacious collection where NYC rumbles along with Heartbreakers-style sleaze, and *Somebody's Love Song* is a ramshackle ballad that Dogs D'Amour might have covered. Best of all is the adventurous *Walking Away*, which builds slowly until it resurrects the all-guns-blazing David Bowie of *Rock'n'Roll Suicide*. There's a lot to take in, but it's a keeper.



John Aizlewood

ROUND-UP: BLUES

By Henry Yates

Marcus King

Young Blood AMERICAN RECORDINGS/REPUBLIC



Among blues musicians, citing Marcus King as the genre's great white hope is fast becoming an interview cliché to rival "We just make music for ourselves, man." The acolytes aren't wrong, though, and this second solo album from the 26-year-old South Carolina guitarist is gritty, punchy and hooky, nodding to the fat-free power-trio format of the late-60s.

Produced in hands-off fashion by the Black Keys' Dan Auerbach, opener *It's Too Late* has you immediately with its clattering cardboard-box drums and the kind of ankle-biting riff that might have Jimmy Page's copyright lawyers fingering the red button (on that subject, we'll assume the distinct echo of Sugababes' *Good To Be Gone* is a pure accident). *Lie Lie Lie* is the best showcase for King's high, reedy, edgy vocals, while *Pain* is the standout guitar moment, the song's risk-taking warts-and-all solo a welcome tonic to the sickly polish of other upcoming gunslingers. Recent single *Hard Working Man* has the crossover chorus – and right now, nobody deserves one more.



Kirk Fletcher

Heartache By The Pound OGIEREA



It's the cask-aged mojo of the FAME Studios in Muscle Shoals, Alabama that marinates Fletcher's often joyful, occasionally lugubrious seventh album. The wonderful *Afraid To Die*, *Too Scared To Live* is sold by his wild-honey vocal, while his clipped lead break on Albert King's *I've Made Nights By Myself* has a master's touch.

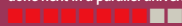


Laura Evans

State Of Mind ROSIE MUSIC



Laura Evans doesn't look like she'd bite, but album opener *I'm Alright* quickly disabuses you of that notion, with its torn-up guitars and winning alley-cat yowl. It's one of several rough diamonds that work well: try the cludding beats of *Drag Me Back In*, or *Fire With Fire* for a suggestion of what crossover-era Fleetwood Mac might have done next in a parallel universe.



Miraculous Mule

Old Bones, New Fire LIGHTNING ARCHIVE



Classic Rock called 2017's *Two Tonne Testimony* "the sound of a post-modern chain gang". Here the Mule initially double down on that description, with frontman Michael J Sheehy kicking off *I Know I've Been Changed* borne only by his band's mournful moan. But twanger *Nobody Nothing* and *We Get What We Deserve* widen their net impressively.



Ian Siegal

Stone By Stone GROW VISION



Nobody puts you in the room like Siegal, and *Stone By Stone* is another argument for spit over polish, so candidly produced that you hear the British bluesman's collaborators whooping and hollering like they're in the Nellcôte basement during the *Exile* sessions. Case in point is *The Fear*, a powerfully intimate strum that serves as an intervention to a wayward friend.



Marcus King: an album that's gritty, punchy and hooky.



Cats In Space

Kickstart The Sun HARMONY FACTORY

Melodic moggies race towards the light – mind that fur!

After decades spent hustling in the melodic rock trenches, it might be unkind to refer to Cats In Space mainman Greg Hart as a journeyman musician, but his CV does rather bear this out. It's 30 years since he co-wrote *Lay Down Your Arms* and *A Far Cry* on Asia's *Aqua* album, and the intervening years have been dotted with occasional albeit insubstantial flurries of activity. So when he launched *Cats In Space* in 2015 it felt like a Hail Mary. A final throw of the dice in AOR's last-chance saloon.

In the seven years since, Hart has worked with all the steely determination of a man who has finally figured out where he's headed and how he's going to get there, and desperately wants to make up for lost time. *Cats In Space* have released six studio albums (including a Christmas collection), a live album and a best-of collection. Which isn't bad for a band who've never troubled the Top 75. They're also on their third singer. It's the CV of a band staring down the retirement end of a 30-year career, and yet it feels, somehow, as if *Cats In Space* are really just getting started.

Album number six, *Kickstart The Sun* finds them ready to "turn the lights on"

after "the last two unprecedented years of darkness". These are clearly laudable aims, and my, what brightness they bring. Slicker than a freshly oiled salamander, it's an album that often sounds like a jukebox musical in search of a theatre, but it's all presented with such clear affection for the bands of yore that it feels churlish to suggest the band might be better off writing for the stage. There are hints of Queen, Toto, Foreigner and ELO – the end of *Last Dance Saloon* has more than a whiff of latter's *Turn To Stone* about it – and it's all performed with a nod and a wink and an enthusiasm that borders on glee.

It's also something of an everything-but-the-kitchen-sink production, from the fanfare horns that parp regally in *King Of Stars* to the climax of the title track, which sounds as if every singer in the galaxy has crowded into the studio. It's a master class in melodic songwriting, with harmonies ladled on top of harmonies and the simplest of piano flourishes powering *Poke The Witch* and *Smoke And Mirrors* to jubilant heights. This is an album that glistens.

Fraser Lewry



Dub War

Westgate Under Fire EARACHE

Reggae-metal firebrands' second chance to shine brightly.



It's difficult to shake off the feeling that if Dub War had been American

they would have been huge, and seen as peers of Rage Against The Machine. Unfortunately, being Welsh and arriving in the mid-90s, just as the UK developed an obsession with Britpop, the band's thrilling, fiery mix of metal, punk and ragga didn't fit in with the significantly less progressive narrative of the era. Frontman Benji Webbe went on to greater success with Skindred, but now he and his old compadres are back with their first album of new material since 1996's *Wrong Side Of Beautiful*.

And what a comeback it is, at once righteously furious (particularly on opener *Blackkkk Man*, inspired by the murder of George Floyd) and deeply, magnificently groovy. From the straight-ahead banger *Vibes In The Place*, destined to rip the roof off any venue, to the grungy *Coffin Lid*, to an adrenalin-fuelled cover of Max Romeo And The Upsetters' *War Ina Babylon* (featuring The Beat's Ranking Roger in his final ever recording), to a suitably romantic version of Marvin Gaye's *Stay Together*, *Westgate Under Fire* is a start-to-finish thrill that suggests Dub War's time might finally have arrived.

Emma Johnston

Osees

A Foul Form CASTLE FACE

High velocity punk rock obliterates all before it



Now on their zillionth release and fiftieth or so name change, Osees

show absolutely no signs of slowing down. You would of course be well within your rights to expect a dip in the quality-control department, but such is the deep well of inspiration that this venerable 21st-century institution draw from that their ability to cross-pollinate, mutate and claim as their own remains completely undiminished.

This time round, Osees – led by the ever restless and endlessly creative singer/guitarist John Dwyer – pay tribute to the punk rock of their youth. The result is a compact

and highly combustible album that packs 10 songs into just 22 minutes. Just as you're catching your breath from one detonation, another six-string explosion goes off to leave you reeling.

With titles such as *Fucking Kill Me* and *Scum Show*, Osees leave you in very little doubt as to where they're coming from.

Julian Marszalek

Kasabian

The Alchemist's Euphoria

SONY

New Kasabian, new mainstream outlook.

With songwriter Serge Pizzorno confidently stepping up to the role of frontman after former singer Tom Meighan's departure following domestic-abuse charges, it's all change at chez Kasabian. Also out is much of the celebratory electro lad-rock that made 2017's *For Cryin' Out Loud* an air-punching return to form, as Pizzorno pivots to synth-heavy, chart-friendly house, R&B and ambient rave textures on album number seven, with a drizzle of cosmic mysticism for flavour.

Mostly it's a poor fit. The Prodigy-like *Rocket Fuel* and rap-rocker *Scriptvire* rollock along on hip-hop brass samples and urgent Arabian strings, and *Strictly Old School* is accomplished synthetic pop, but there's far too much of this sort of stuff around already to justify Kasabian diving in.

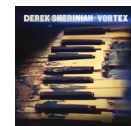
Come ambient rave meanders *Tuve* and *Star Gazer*, things really start to drag. As proven by the crackling *Alygatyry*, driving electro-pop like *Chemicals* and stirring ballads *The Wall* and *Letting Go*, Kasabian's USP has always been a cocky straddling of indie rock and rave. It's a shame they pretty much discard it here.

Mark Beaumont

Derek Sherinian

Vortex INSIDE OUT

The axemen cometh.



Versatile keyboard player Derek Sherinian has always

liked to feature prominent guitarists on his own albums, but this time he's gone overboard. Steve Stevens (currently in Billy Idol's band) buzzes restlessly all over the opening title track. He's followed by Extreme's Nuno Bettencourt, Joe Bonamassa and Steve Lukather in hard-rocking

tandem, Michael Schenker and Zakk Wilde, jazz-rock supremo Mike Stern and Sons Of Apollo (and ex-Guns N' Roses) man Bumblefoot, who plaster their varied talents over a range of 70s-influenced but modern-sounding fusion. It's difficult to be more specific, as Sherinian is a master of blending styles into the unexpected and uncategorisable, but the pounding rhythms of drummer/producer Simon Phillips and bassist Tony Franklin ensure none shall sleep.

■■■■■■■■■■■
Hugh Fielder

Josiah

We Lay on Cold Stone

HEAVY PSYCH SOUNDS

Massive, sprawling psychedellic stoner jams.



Brit riff-ramblers Josiah have always been the most ancient of

modern bands. Since their ascent in the early 2000s they've mined the proto-everything sounds of the late 60s to such utter perfection that there was no reason to believe they were anything but time travellers who got lost on their way to open on Uriah Heep's *Demons And Wizards* tour. After a not-so-brief hiatus when Josiah mainman Mathew Bethancourt formed dope-rock coalition Kings Of Frog Island,

the band re-formed during the pandemic for another trip to the Wayback Machine. And thank Christ for that.

Cold Stone is exactly what you'd want from these freewheeling freaks: epic hard-rocking, acid-gulping jams full of mind-expanding guitar fantasias and thunderous rhythms that sound like an army of wild camels decimating the city. If Monster Magnet slowly losing their minds on the set of *The Holy Mountain* sounds good to you, then get this record.

■■■■■■■■■■■
Sleazegrinder

Jack White

Entering Heaven Alive

THIRD MAN

The celebrated guitarist goes unplugged, with mixed results.



Arriving just months after *Fear Of The Dawn*, Jack White's latest

album finds the plank-spanking conceptualist dusting off his acoustic guitar and making a stylistic U-turn. It's a move that's sharply opposed to his current mélange of rock, hip-hop, prog and whatever else comes to hand. Here, the mood is more relaxed, with a bucolic twist that finds White reacquainting himself with melodies once again. The starkly beautiful *Love Is Selfish* evokes the era of the Stones' *Nellcôte*

adventures, while *A Tip From You To Me's* harmonies and warmth bring humanity.

Unfortunately, a drop in quality control is evident at the album's midpoint. *I've Got You Surrounded (With My Love)* sounds like a remix of a half-formed idea, and the trite and lightweight *Queen Of The Bees* displays the need for some outside input and production discipline.

A fun album, but one in need of trimming and extra heft.

■■■■■■■■■■■
Julian Marszalek

Arthur Brown

Long Long Road MAGNETIC EYE

Still stoking the fire.

Released to coincide with his eightieth birthday, *Long Long Road* reveals the same attributes that made Arthur Brown's debut back in 1968 such an intriguing prospect: the multi-octave voice that soars and swoops, the progressive blues rock that encourages him to test his limits, and the wild flights of lyrical fantasy that keep you pinned to your chair.

'Come out of the toilet with your hands up and put down that bag of crisps or it's curtains for you,' he intones at the beginning of the short but wonderfully surreal *Coffin Confession*. Most of the rest of the album makes more sense, and *I Like Games* suggesting libidinally that Brown's flesh is not yet weak. The title track strikes

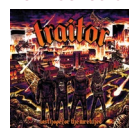
a reflective mood - 'The further we come the further we go'. Multi-instrumentalist Rik Patten has provided a relatively conventional musical framework that anchors Brown's florid momentum, although he too has his moments.

■■■■■■■■■■■
Hugh Fielder

Traitor

Last Hope For The Wretched FIRST BLOOD FAMILY

Underground thrashers show how it should be done.



You have to admire bands with a singular vision and the metallic chops

to deliver it. Boasting shades of Mercyful Fate, Venom, Exciter, Slayer and sundry other early-80s thrash-centric bands, Traitor don't so much play as eviscerate their songs, such is the belligerent precision of their attack on the *Mad Max*-referencing *Drifter*, *Antietam* (their American Civil War epic) and the pile-driving *Why They Fear The Night*. Key to the band's success are the complementary vocals by guitarist Greg Lundmark and drummer Joe Rado and the band's unerring focus on making every riff land like a jackhammer uppercut. The effect is best on hypersonic opener *Sintroducer/Take Over* and the ripping *Baptized In Fire*. This is an album that absolutely

commands your attention, and sounds like the evolutionary step beyond *Kill 'Em All* had Metallica stuck to their early guns.

Old-skool thrash fans rejoice and get *Wretched*.

■■■■■■■■■■■
Essi Berelian

Five Finger Death Punch

AfterLife BETTER NOISE

Album nine is a reassuring-sounding body blow.



It might have escaped your notice, but Five Finger Death Punch have experienced more travails than Oliver Reed on a pub crawl.

Singer Ivan Moody, who struggles with addiction the way a cage fighter goes after an opponent, wasn't averse to the odd bar brawl himself, often getting in his own way as he and his band struggled to stay afloat.

AfterLife sees the band shedding their long-term guitarist. Not that you'd notice, as they haven't strayed far from their head-pummelling, densely melodic, dryly produced, hard-hitting stuff, and in a good way. The title track will cause a hockey arena full of punters to lose their minds, ditto the relentless *Gold Gutter*, eyes heavenwards, welcoming the familiar death from above.

■■■■■■■■■■■
Philip Wilding

ROUND-UP: MELODIC ROCK

By Dave Ling



Generation Radio: bringing classic 80s rock back to life.

Generation Radio

Generation Radio FRONTIERS



When the Grammy-winning Rascal Flatts wrapped a 20-year career in 2021, many wondered what their bassist/keyboard player/vocalist/songwriter and producer Jay DeMarcus might do next. Little did they know, this was pretty much a done deal. By the

time the trio were officially over, Generation Radio had already debuted live in Nashville.

The line between country music and AOR is increasingly blurred, and joining DeMarcus in this promising unit are two icons of melodic hard rock: Jason Scheff, a vocalist and bassist with Chicago for three decades-plus, and drummer/vocal powerhouse Deen Castronovo (Journey, Revolution Saints), plus guitarists Chris

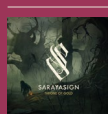
Rodriguez and Tom Yankton. Even at 60, Scheff remains a superlative singer, and with support from Castronovo, from the swoon-inducing *Why Are You Calling Me Now* to the frailty of *Finally Got It Right*, Generation Radio's commitment to "bringing classic 1980s rock back to life" is unmistakable.

Lovers of Chicago, Journey and, yes, Rascal Flatts, this album is for you.

■■■■■■■■■■■

Sarayasign

Throne Of God MELODIC PASSION



Jesper Lindbergh dreamed up the concept of the Saraya almost 25 years ago, and over a planned

course of four albums the Swede finally brings the saga to life. Act one, *Throne Of God*, is a work of stunning ambition, with world-class vocals, intelligent arrangements and a compulsion to push the envelope beyond a run-of-the-mill commercial hard rock act.

■■■■■■■■■■■

Compass

Theory Of Tides ESCAPE MUSIC



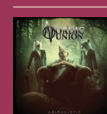
Led by Steve Newman of the British band Newman, Compass provide an escape valve for material

considered a little too weighty or progressive for the Newman blueprint. This second Compass album, a concept piece about the iconic 16/17th-century astronomer and scientist Galileo Galilei, was produced and mixed to pomp-perfection by Lionheart's Steve Mann.

■■■■■■■■■■■

Nordic Union

Animalistic FRONTIERS



Three albums into their partnership, Pretty Maids singer Ronnie Atkins and human dynamo Erik

Mårtensson continue to produce fireworks. Via his output with Eclipse and W.E.T., Mårtensson has forged a distinctive writing and production style, which continues here with *In Every Waking Hour*. *Scream* and the power ballad *Riot*.

■■■■■■■■■■■

Jimi Jamison

Rock Hard ICONOCLASSIC



More than 30 years after being recorded and shelved, the long-lost solo debut from the late, great former

Survivor frontman has surfaced. Though much of it was re-recorded, re-purposed or bootlegged, it's wonderful to have these songs in one place, just as Jamison intended, and includes a rare version of Survivor's *Ever Since The World Began* from Sly Stallone's movie *Lock Up*.

■■■■■■■■■■■



H.e.a.t.

Force Majeure EARMUSIC

The classics never go out of style for this old-school Swedish crew.

Between *Top Gun*'s eternally irritating hero Maverick ruling the big screen once more, Kate Bush topping the charts, Russia going mad and threatening nuclear war, the possibility of recession hanging over our heads, and acid-wash jeans regaining popularity among the young and the fashionable, it seems that the 80s are back with a vengeance. This is excellent news for old-school Swedish crew H.e.a.t., because they wear their allegiance to the decade proudly on their denim, patch-adorned sleeve.

Force Majeure, their seventh album, marks the return of their original frontman, Kenny Leckremo, following the departure of *Swedish Idol*-winner Erik Grönwall, and the intervening years have clearly been kind to him, as he hits those Dio-inspired high notes like a baseball champ knocking the ball out of the park over and over again.

While the band attempted to experiment a little more on recent albums, this time there's absolutely no messing about. *Force Majeure* is as straight-talking, no-nonsense as it gets, a towering love letter to the most classic of rock. Album highlight and lead single *Nationwide* is on a high-way to the danger zone, a high-octane celebration of like-minded crowds coming together to sing along – it might not actually be on the new *Top Gun*

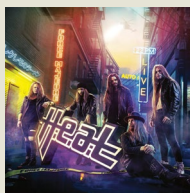
soundtrack, but spiritually that's exactly where it belongs, backing an enthusiastic game of beach volleyball.

Guitars duel, riffs are given free rein to widdle away into infinity and beyond, vocal harmonies speak of an unbreakable brotherhood grounded in noise, beers and shampoo. *Tainted Blood* is just a backwards-looped drum track away from Def Leppard in their stadium-shagging pomp, a call-and-response chorus backing Leckremo's window-shattering wail, while *One Of Us* allows a bit of a breather with the obligatory tortured, lighter-waving ballad complete with a Slash-style guitar solo. All the boxes have been ticked.

What's infectious about this album is that the band sound like they're having such insane levels of fun. It's like witnessing a puppy bounding around showing off its favourite new stick – if it doesn't make you smile you must be at least a little bit dead inside. H.e.a.t. are not cool, and they don't want to be. Cool is boring. It's restrictive. It's overrated. Better to be the cake-fuelled kid running around in circles giggling until you're dizzy and feeling a bit sick than the one sitting back looking down its nose at those joining in with the party. Join the gang and ride that wave of nostalgia.



Emma Johnston



Arch Enemy

Deceivers CENTURY MEDIA

Serious death metal Swedes indulge their symphonic Eurovision side.



Fronted by straight-edge Canadian vegan Alissa White-Gluz,

Swedish melodic death metallers Arch Enemy make unlikely recruits to Satan's stampeding stormtrooper hordes.

Edging ever closer to the delirious pomposity of symphonic metal, these veteran Nordic nihilists sound both technically precise and comically preposterous on their eleventh studio album, but with

a ferocious hardcore edge that makes them difficult to dismiss as pure pantomime. As White-Gluz swerves effortlessly between clean pop-rock vocals and guttural porcine grunting while ex-Carcass guitarist Michael Arnott cranks out the overdriven multi-tracked flamethrower fretwork, thunderous electro-orchestral battle anthems like *Deceiver*, *Deceiver* and *Spreading Black Wings* blur the line between Eurovision uber-kitsch and turbo-trash avant-punk extremism. There is wistful Celtic pop yearning here too, amid all the gravel-voiced bellowing. Indeed, spangled folk-metal epics like *The Watcher* and *Poisoned Arrow* could almost be Enya, albeit a fire-breathing, nail-gargling, skull-splitting version of Enya shat forth from the rank-smelling depths of Beelzebub's very own flame-grilled anus. In other words, fun for all the family.



Stephen Dalton

Screeching Weasel

The Awful Disclosures Of

TRIPED/RUM BAR

Always the pop-punk bridesmaids.



Even before he was cancelled by the cool kids' punk scene, Ben

Foster's Screeching Weasel were marked down for life as also-rans. They're regarded for their influential Ramones-meets-Descendents style that informed the lesser talents of Blink-182, Fall Out Boy, Taking Back Sunday and other landfill pop-punk formulaic enough to make even a 12-year-old wince. Nevertheless, classic Weasel albums *My Brain Hurts*, *Anthem*

For *A New Tomorrow* and *Bark Like A Dog* keep Screeching Weasel's ledger in credit.

The *Awful Disclosures Of* doesn't match those heights, but thankfully neither does it reinvent the trademark bittersweet Weasel wheel, and aims high with the stirring, riff-heavy *Just Another Fool*, *Pandora's Eyes* and *Tell Me Your Lies*.

Having outlived the duration of the Ramones' career by 13 years and one album, Foster has now vowed that the continually splitting/re-forming Screeching Weasel will die when he does. So strap yourselves in, we're here for the long haul.



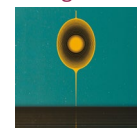
Alex Burrows

The Utopia Strong

International Treasure

ROCKET

A beautifully realised journey through inner space.



I can't quite imagine what a night back at the Utopia Strong's house

might entail. I'm imagining a living room set somewhere in the 1970s with Willy Wonka having had a hand in the décor, but whatever hue the wallpaper might take on, or the abundance of lava lamps taking up the hallway, you'd know that whoever was spinning the tunes – be it Steve Davis, Kavus Torabi or Mike York – the end of the evening would at least be an exercise in orchestrated bliss.

International Treasure is a familiar mix of the unfamiliar, which is to say uncharted sounds shifting in elliptical patterns, wave upon wave of electronic and psychedelic sound undulating in a world uninhibited by boundaries but not without structure. These songs do have somewhere to go, but no sense of urgency in getting there. This is all about the journey, and what a trip it is.



Philip Wilding

Nebula

Transmissions From Mothership Earth

HEAVY PSYCH SOUNDS

Long-lost space surfers touch back down in the nick of time.



Nebula's status in the pantheon of modern rock'n'roll has been tragically

eroded over the ensuing decades. At the dawn of the

millennium they were denim-clad gods stalking the Earth, the glorious result of guitarist Eddie Glass stepping away from van riders Fu Manchu to explore the wild and woolly world of hairy-scary acid-psych. Back in '99 there was no one more way out than Nebula, and they inspired countless others to explore strange new aural vistas.

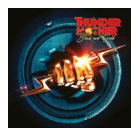
After a good 10-year nap, the band sauntered back in town to reclaim their stoner-king throne with 2019's *Heavy Shit*. Now the bruising, woozing *Transmissions* only asserts their dominance. Thunderous piles of throbbing fuzz, oozing waves of lysergic syrup, weird vibes and heavy riffs all coalesce in this cinematic trip through UFO crash-landings, werewolf biker orgies and Saturday-night psychotic breakdowns. They've got a song here called *Melt Your Head*. It's quite literal. Hot damn.

■■■■■■■■■■■
Sleazegrinder

Thundermother

Black And Gold AFM

The highs and lows of a life in rock'n'roll from Scandi quartet.



It seems that Sweden is enjoying quite the hard-rock revival this

summer. While their fellow countrymen H.e.a.t. have returned with a full-tilt blast of unrefined hard rock on their new album (reviewed on page 70), Thundermother are coming from a similar standpoint but with more in the way of subtlety.

With countless 'woah-oah's and the use of a Bon Jovi-style talk-box, *Black And Gold* glides along on a wave of singalong arena rock, especially in the joyous *Raise Your Hands*, celebrating the search for self-made nuggets of glamour in life even when times are hard. But for every air-punching anthemic chorus there's a moment of reflection, as in the rolling blues rock of *Hot Mess* (described by the band as "Aerosmith-meets-Aretha Franklin"), which allows singer Guernica Mancini to wring every drop of emotion from her soul. *Borrowed Time*, meanwhile, offers a surprisingly downbeat ending, a portrait of the crash in mood that comes when the show is over and it's time to deal with your own self-doubt. With a gleaming melody contrasting and complementing the gloom, it brings to mind a song by another of their country's top exports,

ABBA's *The Winner Takes It All*, reinvented and beamed through a classic-rock prism. There's a lot more going on in *Black And Gold* than it at first suggests.

■■■■■■■■■■■
Emma Johnston

Bernie Marsden

Trios CONQUEST MUSIC

Honouring guitar heroes with power-trio covers.



After his blues tribute albums *Kings* and *Chess*, Bernie Marsden now

recreates tracks by his favourite guitarists leading power trios, using his own three-piece completed by drummer Jimmy Copley (who passed away in 2017) and bassist David Levy (who was with Rory Gallagher on his final tours). The sessions date from 2007 but are previously unreleased.

The oldest song here, *Outside Woman Blues* – first recorded by 'Blind' Joe Reynolds in 1929 – is covered in homage to Clapton as on Cream's *Disraeli Gears* in 1967. From that same year comes Peter Green rarity *Driftin' Blues*, which he recorded alongside Mick Fleetwood and John McVie pre-Fleetwood Mac, and Hendrix's *Spanish Castle Magic*. *Drifting*, a later, post-Experience Hendrix track, signals Marsden's nose for the connoisseur's choice. Likewise his Gallagher cover (Taste's *Same Old Story*) and Jeff Beck tribute (Don Nix's *Black Cat Moan*, recorded in '73 by Beck, Bogert & Appice). The other trios revisited starred Robin Trower, Joe Walsh, Leslie West and Johnny Winter, before the album closes with a new take on Cozy Powell's *Na Na Na* (featuring one B Marsden, and a hit in 1974).

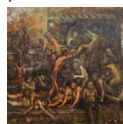
In all, another master class in rock history.

■■■■■■■■■■■
Neil Jeffries

Candy

Heaven Is Here RELAPSE

Noisy US quintet push the post-hardcore envelope.



Citing veteran hardcore and metalcore icons like Minor Threat, Cro-Mags and Hatebreed as key inspirations, Brooklyn-based quintet Candy play blasting rock that is simple, direct, politically angry and fucking loud.

After a four-year gap, *Heaven Is Here* is a reliably rowdy

bucking-bronco beast that bends and stretches the parameters of heavy music with bursts of electronic crackle, ear-bleeding noise and exotic sonic textures. Most of the stand-out tracks defy regular rock dynamics, from eerie industrial noisecore incantation *Kinesthesia* to ferocious electro-metal stomper *Transcend To Wet* and the 10-minute psych-punk epic *Perverse*. In fairness, splenetic garage-punk rage is the band's default setting, but even these tracks contain hidden twists. The winningly titled *World Of Shit* is a pretty standard guitar slammer, until the sound of a cat being attacked by a swarm of robot bees kicks in midway through, elevating the jaunty melody considerably.

A mostly exhilarating, agreeably disagreeable racket.

■■■■■■■■■■■
Stephen Dalton

Rusty

The Resurrection Of Rust

EMI/CAPITOL

Elvis Costello's first band finally make their debut album.



Before Elvis Costello, before The Attractions and long before The Imposters,

there was Rusty, in which young Declan MacManus plied his trade around the pubs of Liverpool, with limited success.

Fifty-one years after their formation, Rusty's co-leader Allan Mayes suggested a live reunion. MacManus (now Costello, of course) declined, but was open to the pair recording six Rusty songs with The Imposters: two originals (including *Maureen & Sam*, which Costello would exhume for *New Amsterdam*'s B-side, *Ghost Train*) and four covers.

The good-natured, twangsome results prefigure Costello's more angsty work with Clover on the Nick Lowe-produced *My Aim Is True*. They're at their best on the terrific, harmony-drenched *Don't Lose Your Grip On Love*, one of two songs that Lowe wrote for Brinsley Schwarz, and a feisty entwining of Neil Young's *Everybody Knows This Is Nowhere* and *Dance Dance Dance*. Mayes offers an affecting, grizzled take on Jim Ford's *I'm Ahead If I Can Quit While I'm Behind*, but the real delight is another MacManus original, the wistful *Warm House (And An Hour Of Joy)*, a template for the magic to come.

■■■■■■■■■■■
John Aizlewood

BEST OF THE REST

Other new releases out this month.

Clamm

Care MEAT MACHINE

Joining the current glut of attitude-driven, post-punk intensity presently bursting out of Australia (NWOANW, anyone?), this Melbourne trio blaze undernably with desperate Saints thuggery, casual swagger and an occasionally skronking No Wave sax. **7/10**

GWAR

The New Dark Ages PIT

The gore-spattered Virginian shock-schlockers' second album following the 2014 death of leading light Dave Brockie, which left them an enthusiastic Trigger's broom of hand-me-down panto-metal cliché, offers profane techno-thrash with prog ambitions. Mostly harmless. **6/10**

Dune Rats

Real Rare Whale BMG

You'd have to be quite the miserable bastard to hate this: indomitably cheerful, earworm-infested, post-SoCal fratcore that bounces out of the speakers like a drunk puppy at the beach. You can actually hear the grins on the gang vocals. Australian? Obviously. **7/10**

The Fernweh

Torschlußspanik! WINTERLUDE

Lush, ambitious, Liverpool-born, post-everything, quintessentially Anglo psych-pop-prog hobbled by a confounding title. Luckily it's great. Byrdsian XTC-ishness abounds. Mature, intelligent, pun-laced aspirations. Floyd with a sense of fun. But in a good way. **8/10**

Traams

Personal Best FAT CAT

A tremendously engaging laboratory of sound benefits from a succession of idiosyncratic guest vocalists, Protomartyr's Joe Casey brings a hectic Fall vibe to *The Light At Night*, while Soffie Viemose ramps up the mesmeric Kosmische atmos on *Sleeper*. Vibey. **7/10**

Soulfly

Totem NUCLEAR BLAST

Twelfth album in 25 years from the metal stalwarts (and their first with Arthur Rizk who replaced guitarist Marc Rizzo) finds Max Cavalera and co-writing drummer son Zyon on furiously fine form. Vanilla thrash by comparison to early Soulfly, but headspinningly intense. **8/10**

Besvärjelsen

Atlas MAGNETIC EYE

Swedish 'forest rockers', eh. Who even knew this was a thing? Whatever, *Atlas* is sound stuff. Titanic, dynamic, cinematic, reliably heavy, yet eminently accessible. Lea Amling Alazam occasionally recalls Siouxsie, if more reliably (whisper it) in tune. Bewitching. **8/10**

Amongst Liars

Amongst Liars EARACHE

Calling to mind QOTSA isn't exactly a rare attribute among 21st-century rock bands, but with Eastbourne's Amongst Liars it's only the beginning of the story. There's a distinctive collation of nicely curated modern rock tropes. And they've got actual tunes, which is always a bonus. **7/10**

Quiet Confusion

Magella GO DOWN

Bands often self-identify as something they're actually not. Italy's Quiet Confusion think they've made a stoner album laced with fuzz and 70s psych. They haven't. They're better than that. This is fleet-footed and groovy, blues-infused indie ingenuity. Which is confusing, but never quiet. **8/10**

Somnus Throne

Nemesis Lately HEAVY PSYCH SOUNDS

Doubtless destined to be indexed in the *Pharmacopeia Metallica* alongside Dead Meadow and Sleep, LA-based trio Somnus Throne deliver vast, Quaalude-flavoured, edifice-sized riff-propelled fuzz-outs while 1,000-yard lol-gazing the living shit out of their shoes. Righteous. **7/10**

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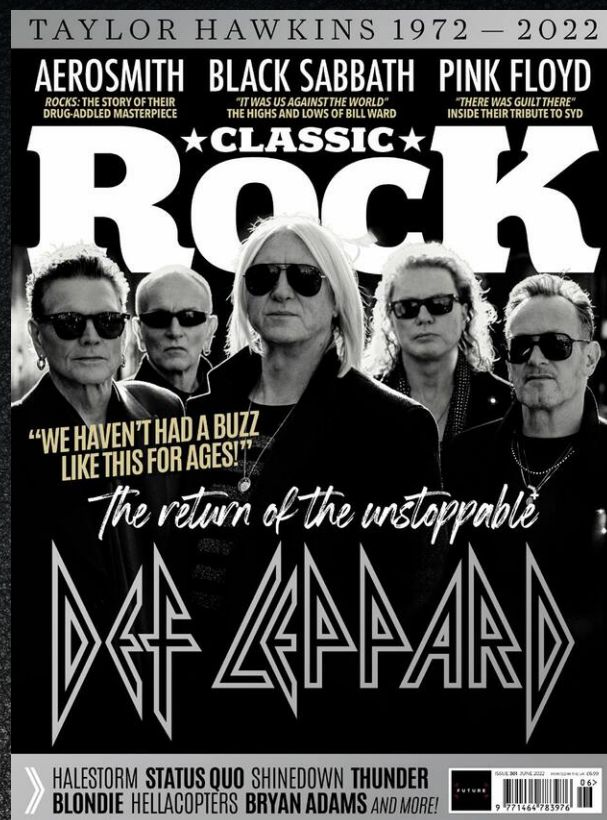


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THE HARD STUFF REISSUES

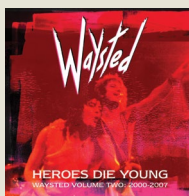


Waysted

Heroes Die Young – Waysted Volume

Two: 2000-2007 HNE RECORDINGS

Get that bus out, Pete Way's in town.



It's December 2008. We are in freezing-cold North Wales. Prestatyn Sands, to be precise, the Pontins calamity zone that provided the backdrop for the 1973 film *Holiday On The Buses* and is currently staging the second Hard Rock Hell festival, during which the band Waysted will – God willing – be performing.

This writer is standing outside the resort's fish and chip shop with Waysted's bassist, former UFO/Fastway stalwart Pete Way who is bemoaning the fact that he cannot find his chalet. "I can't find my chalet," he repeats for the umpteenth time, while fans gather round bemusedly. The only solution is to retreat to the bar, where upon arrival we discover that Way has no cash and his credit cards don't work. And he can't put drinks on his room because he doesn't know where his room is...

Apologies for the lengthy preamble, but the above really sums up the essence of life as a member of Waysted, and also explains why one of the discs in this collection is called *Organized Chaos... Live*. Because against the odds Way and his wastrels turned out to be the band of Hard Rock Hell II.

Listening to this *Heroes Die Young* collection is a poignant experience, bringing back memories of unfulfilled potential, on-stage brilliance, songwriting genius, predictable shambolicism and ill-fitting leather trousers – all at the same time. The five-CD package concentrates

on Waysted's latter years and comprises: *Wilderness Of Mirrors*, an album of demos for the 1986 album *Save Your Prayers*; 2004's *Back From The Dead* full-length, featuring hotshot new guitarist Chris George; *Boot From The Dead*, with tracks recorded live at London's Mean Fiddler in February 2005, plus bonus UFO songs with Paul 'Tonka' Chapman on guitar; the aforementioned *Organized Chaos... Live*, recorded at the Barfly in Glasgow in September 2005; and 2007 studio album *The Harsh Reality*. (Hope you're keeping up, as there'll be a test later.)

To these ears, the highlight is the final disc, *The Harsh Reality*, a criminally underrated release featuring the hip-swingin' hit-single-that-never-was *Keepin' It Sweet*, the aptly rampant *Out Of Control*, and a cover of Mike D'Abo's much-covered *Handbags And Gladrag*s, which frontman Fin Muir had sung for the opening theme of the Ricky Gervais-starring TV series *The Office*. Oh, and a special mention goes to *Breakfast Show* (from *Back From The Dead*), a surreal stomp-fest that finds Way and Muir occupying an alternative, er, reality as GMTV presenters Eamonn Holmes and Anthea Turner (or similar).

A final plea: if anyone ever tracks down that elusive Hard Rock Hell chalet, let's put a blue plaque on it with the words: "Pete Way wasn't here." How very Waysted that would be.

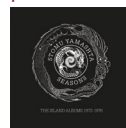
Geoff Barton

Stomu Yamashta

Seasons: The Island
Albums 1972-1976

ESOTERIC/CHERRY RED

First ever box set from cult Japanese prog-rock percussion maestro.



A cult name in prog rock, jazz fusion and modern classical

circles in the 1970s, Japanese percussionist and composer Stomu Yamashta is probably best known for featuring on the soundtrack to the Bowie-starring film *The Man Who Fell To Earth*, and on the non-rock front he has also collaborated with Peter Maxwell Davies, Robert Altman, the Royal Ballet and many more.

Spanning Yamashta's fertile early years in Europe, this first ever box set of his work maps a kaleidoscopic musical cosmos, from Miles Davis-style electric squelch to primitive proto-techno-beat collages, trippy avant-lounge jams and even a burst of Vivaldi given the full Wendy Carlos synth treatment. Among the tracks familiar from Bowie's mind-bending sci-fi classic are the churning Kraut-ish mantra *Mandala*, the mournfully chiming *Memory Of Hiroshima* and the lovely, spare, twinkling tone poem *Wind Words*. The last two sister albums in this seven-disc set showcase Yamashta's supergroup project Go, featuring Steve Winwood and Klaus Schulze, which moved him into more commercial prog-lite terrain, with bluesy soft-rock songs nestled alongside stately orchestral arrangements by another notable Bowie collaborator, Paul Buckmaster. These are the weakest collections in an otherwise excellent anthology, although the final Parisian concert disc does at least add some pleasing extra rhythmic poke and vintage analogue-era audience cheers.

Stephen Dalton

My Life With The Thrill Kill Kult

Sexplosion! WAX TRAX

Reissue of group's most successful album on their 30th anniversary, now with bonus tracks.

On its initial release, *Sexplosion!* was greeted as a shameless excursion into disco by vocalist Groovie Mann, a soundtrack to depraved sexual fantasy. And

for sure, with its Bond samples, cut-up funk and house courtesy of Buzz McCoy, each track throws up a tag cloud of lewd, lubricious associations – sleaze, fornication, lust, oil, motels. However, there's a certain Yeloesque element to tracks like the Bond-sampling *A Martini Built For 2*, or *Mood No 6*.

In its time, *Sexplosion!* Might have seemed wholly decadent and gratuitous, but the very title of *Any Way Ya Wanna*, the previously unreleased track featured here, brings out the necessarily underlying theme of the album in the context of 2022, in which far-right bigotry is once again on the rise – a plea for the decry and exploited, for tolerance, for Pride.

David Stubbs

Keef Hartley Band

Sinnin' For You: The Albums 1969-1973

CHERRY RED

Funky drummer whoops it up.



Preston-born drummer Keef Hartley began the 60s playing in

a Merseybeat combo fronted by hamster-chomping comedian Freddie Starr, and finished the decade performing to half a million hippies at Woodstock with his own band.

He paid his dues with R&B group The Artwoods and John Mayall's Bluesbreakers, before putting together the Keef Hartley Band in 1968.

In his Native American headdress, Hartley was a noted attraction on the club circuit, and recorded seven albums in four years. All are highly regarded by connoisseurs for their fusion of jazz, rock and blues, holding progressive rather than commercial appeal.

This seven-CD celebration begins with 1969 debut *Halfbreed*, opening with a spoof call from Mayall sacking his drummer. With the bluesy vocals of Miller Anderson, and Gary Thain on bass, it was sufficiently impressive to win the band a place at Woodstock.

The Battle Of North West Six and *The Time Is Near* (both 1970) were similarly well-received. *Overdog* ('71) moves closer to hard rock in the vein of the James Gang's *Funk #49*.

Of the 67 tracks here, 15 are live, including fourth album *Little Big Band* ('71), recorded at the Marquee club. On this and 1972's



God Only Knows: The Story Of Brian Wilson, The Beach Boys And The California Myth

David Leaf OMNIBUS PRESS

The life of Brian.

You can't fault author David Leaf for fan-boy tenacity. *God Only Knows* is his third attempt to nail this subject matter, and it's hard to argue with his talent for assembling information since he began his odyssey in the mid-70s. You may know that Leaf is the driving force behind various Beach Boys box sets, notably the magnificent *Pet Sounds* one, and the inspiration that drove Brian Wilson to address his problematic project, the so-called *Smile* album. If not, Leaf will tell you anyway. On first meeting Dennis Wilson, drummer and poster boy for the golden surfing generation, Leaf explains his desire to write a book about Brian. "Good luck" is the response.

But write he did, and generations of rock stars have thanked him. Tom Petty compared Brian to Beethoven (Burt Bacharach and Johann Sebastian Bach, maybe), and blessed Leaf at a music business do: "Having just helped George Harrison rewrite his acceptance speech (Billboard Music Awards, 1992), I was backstage next to him and Tom Petty, when much to my surprise, Tom leaned over to me and whispered, 'Great book, man.'" Sir Paul McCartney, an octogenarian two days older than Brian, offers 'An Overture' and the first use of the word

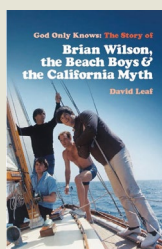
'genius' (Brian gets 50, whereas Al Jardine gets 27 mentions).

Leaf is no revisionist, nor a dirt digger like the entertaining Steven Gaines is in the page-turner *Heroes And Villains*. He's best when providing the reader with an emotional crutch to better understand Brian's dysfunctional life: the fatherly clout round the ear administered by ghastrly Murry Wilson that rendered his son deaf on his right side, which meant he heard everything in mono; the piano in the sandbox; the over-usage of LSD that Jimmy Webb cites as the musician's 'heaven and hell'. Brian's resilience is a motif. He survived when his brothers Dennis and Carl didn't: his 1988 comeback album for Sire Records is brought back to life.

Brian's musical magnificence is a given. He didn't write many lyrics. That was left to such as jingle man Tony Asher, Jack Rieley, Tandy Almer, Van Dyke Parks, Murry himself (*Break Away*) and the elephant in the room, Mike Love, but his teenage pop symphonies (to God) are matchless. Even if all he had composed was *The Warmth Of The Sun* (originally a flipping B-side) or *Till I Die*, we'd be vibed. Okay, he is a genius.

■■■■■■■■■■

Max Bell



Access All Areas

Barbara Charone WHITE RABBIT

PR titan/lifelong music lover's star-studded memoir.

By any standards, Barbara Charone has led a thrillingly fast and furious life. Glass of rosé in one hand, constantly buzzing mobile in the other, this behemoth of the PR world has moved among rock's elite and championed some of popular culture's most enduring figures from the 70s to the present (Madonna, Keith Richards, Mark Ronson, Robert Plant, Russell Brand...). It takes a combination of steel-cut confidence and genuine passion for music to do what she's done, all of which is captured in the tales of *Access All Areas*.

From a gig-hungry youth in suburban Chicago and tearaway years writing for *Sounds*, *NME* and more, Charone ultimately found her calling as a publicist – as her clear, frills-free prose reflects. Expect more 'those were the days'-type declarations than new insights into the cultural landscape, but for a swift window into one of rock's premier movers and shakers (and fair bit of her beloved Chelsea FC), look this way.

■■■■■■■■■■

Polly Glass

Rock 'N' Roll Plays Itself

John Scanlan REAKTION BOOKS

More screen grabs than you can shake a rock star at.

Subtitled 'A Screen History', this book begins with *Don't Look Back*, DA Pennebaker's seminal 1965 Bob

Dylan documentary that pioneered the fly-on-the-wall style. From there it's back to the beginning: Elvis from the waist up on the *Ed Sullivan Show* in 1955, rocksploitation movies like *The Girl Can't Help It* and *Expresso Bongo* and the Beatles bonanza.

Author John Scanlan traces the increasing use of music in films, such as in *The Graduate*, *Apocalypse Now* and *Easy Rider*, and the rock-festival films of Monterey and Woodstock and the grisly denouement at Altamont in *Gimme Shelter*. Mostly he keeps it chronological, but that gets trickier when you've got Pink Floyd playing an empty arena in Pompeii, hippies running around at Glastonbury Fayre, and star-studded events like *The Last Waltz*. Meanwhile, Bowie is bringing in a whole new theatrical element, there's

a wave of nostalgia movies (*That'll Be The Day*, *American Graffiti*), and directors are casting rock stars as actors.

Punk brings its own breed of filmmaker – Derek Jarman, Julien Temple, Don Letts – and after an interesting diversion on the failed video disc Scanlan gets stuck into the impact of MTV's targeted marketing of black artists and the video promo. He then doubles back on himself to The Beatles' *Let It Be* and a couple of Stones concert films, before a dissertation on *Spinal Tap*. From the sublime to the ridiculous, he climaxes with Metallica's *Some Kind Of Monster* and *The Osbournes*.

Fascinating stuff.

■■■■■■■■■■

Hugh Fielder

Pride, Pop & Politics

Darryl W Bullock OMNIBUS

Sing if you're glad to be gay.

Rock and homosexuality are stranger bedfellows than they ought to be.

Yet, as Darryl W Bullock explains in what is partly a history of the relationship between British homosexuality and British rock, the two have facilitated each other for decades.

Bullock takes us back to the ribald Molly houses of the 1700s, and 1960s/70s drag entertainer Danny La Rue claiming "my act wouldn't work if I was gay", but when the Gay Liberation Front began its baby steps towards becoming an active advocacy organisation in 1970, long-forgotten blues rockers Hot Ice played the first benefit. A year later, a volunteer called Barry manned the GLF switchboard. "It was a surprise to me he had anything to do with music at all," says the GLF's Ralph Stephenson, shortly after 'Barry' had outed himself as Freddie Mercury. Later, with his eye for impish detail, Bullock tells us of Oasis, the gay club in Bristol where Mercury hurtled on to the dancefloor while "his nervous bandmates occupied a corner booth".

In January 1972, David Bowie announced he was gay and the trickle towards equality for gay rockers really began. Tom Robinson was a game changer, and Skunk Anansie's Skin became the UK's first arena-filling hard-rocking British lesbian. And as the always excellent Bullock notes, for all



that the story is ongoing, the curve is towards tolerance and acceptance. As Rob Halford acknowledges, "coming out was the best thing I could have done. Record sales didn't plunge, show attendance didn't plunge. Unconditional love will accept you for who you are."



John Aizlewood

Iron Maiden

The Official Colouring Book FANTOONS

Maiden's merchandising strays way outside the lines.



Only true masters of the dark art of shameless merchandising – those flogging branded tankards, jigsaws, pinball machines and the like – could have come up with something as dastardly as *Iron Maiden: The Official Colouring Book*. Seventy-two pages of monochrome cartoon art for Maiden's comic-art-friendly fan base to take a careful crayon to zombie mascot Eddie in a variety of intriguing and dramatic scenarios – Boer War battleground, axe fight with Satan, hara-kiri – and a major headache for social services.

My four-year-old wouldn't touch it with a foot-long crayola, and didn't stop crying even at the more kiddie-friendly pages, such as the bloody-hatchet-wielding Tickle-Me Eddie.

Flicking between classic Derek Riggs-indebted scenes and more inventive styles – Eddie as a psychedelic Aztec god, or the band as videogame characters – there's a playful wit to some of the sketches. Eddie recreates Grant Wood's *American Gothic* and the painting of the Mona Lisa, gets impaled on Excalibur, and features on his own brand of breakfast cereal, Shredded Eddies, made from chocolate-coated bits of brain. The band get their fair share of wrinkle-free hero poses, but for the most part you'd best stock up on Rotting Flesh Green and Exposed Muscle Pink.



Mark Beaumont

Re-sisters

Cosey Fanni Tutti FABER

A celebration of three trailblazing women united across the centuries.

A fearless force of nature, industrial music pioneer, artist, provocateur and Throbbing Gristle founding member, Cosey

Fanni Tutti told the story of her own extraordinary life in her whip-smart autobiography *Art Sex Music* in 2017. In her new book (subtitled *The Lives And Recordings Of Delia Derbyshire, Margery Kempe And Cosey Fanni Tutti*) she follows the threads that connect her with two similarly passionate, creative women: Delia Derbyshire, the genius composer for the BBC's Radiophonic Workshop who paved the way for the electronic music boom (and gifted us, most famously, with Ron Grainer's *Doctor Who* theme tune), and Margery Kempe, a pious 15th-century mystic credited as the author of the first English-language autobiography.

Overflowing with affection for the two other women, Cosey draws parallels between them and her own drive to create, to be taken seriously as an artistic force, and to be unafraid to express herself on her own terms. Derbyshire often found herself patronised by the hyper-male institution she infiltrated, but persevered thanks to her conviction in her own technical knowledge and talent. Kempe, like the author when presenting some of her more controversial artworks, was reviled and

mistrusted by the community around her. A particularly upsetting description of rape and coercion demonstrates exactly how, in the 1970s, women's bodies were still viewed as male possessions.

Re-sisters is far from a misery memoir, though. It's a joyful celebration of female energy, individuality and creativity, written by a warm and engaging storyteller.



Emma Johnston

Stunt Rocker: The Many Adventures Of Andy Ellison

Andy Ellison WINTERGARDEN

Smashed, blocked and banned.



Riding the waves of mod, glam and punk, Andy Ellison seems destined for stardom but instead gains fringe notoriety. Inspired by The Who, he forms Pop Art mod crew John's Children, in which the natural frontman stage dives, invades the audience and rips his clothes off, all before James Osterberg is out of high school. Steered by Yardbirds manager Simon Napier-Bell, who provides

the foreword, John's Children cause chaos, and launch Marc Bolan's songwriting career with *Desdemona*.

After a stint in a bakery, Ellison returns to the fray with Jet, who sign to CBS and seem poised for success. Alas "the group climbed high on the glam-rock bandwagon, just before one of its sparkly wheels fell off, JETtisoning its occupants into the cosmic ditch".

He has a last stab with new-wave punkers Radio Stars, and puts out such tawdry classics as *Dirty Pictures* and *No Russians In Russia*, tours with Eddie & The Hot Rods, and gets the Roundhouse shut down.

Family tragedy ensues after his brother dies in a climbing accident, yet our hero bats off whatever life throws at him, rarely giving in to cynicism or despair. There's a happy-ish ending to the yarn, as, with the help of Finnish musicians, he revives John's Children and finds a new audience.

The cover photo pose, bleached hair and bare-chested, hints at a desire to be seen as England's answer to Iggy Pop – or was it the other way round?



Claudia Elliott



The Sound Of The Machine: My Life In Kraftwerk & Beyond

Karl Bartos OMNIBUS

Memoir from the co-composer of some of the German electronic music pioneers' finest works.

With their matching outfits and on-stage presentation, Kraftwerk always seemed to be an egalitarian operation in which all aspects of the machinery of their music were of the same, functional significance. However, there was a significant divide in the group, with Wolfgang Flür, ostensibly co-percussionist in the group, and Karl Bartos very much junior partners. When Kraftwerk first toured America, group founders Ralf Hütter and Florian Schneider stayed in a swanky Central Park hotel, while Bartos and Flür had to bunk up in a much seedier dive.

Furthermore, although he actually earned less early on with Kraftwerk than he had done playing with his covers band The Jokers, Hütter disallowed Bartos from pursuing any other musical projects. Bartos was, he says, a freelancer with a single client. He eventually left Kraftwerk in 1990 after a lengthy recording hiatus in which it became clear that Hütter and Schneider, both from wealthy backgrounds, were oblivious to his need to earn money.

Bartos clearly values his association with Kraftwerk however, as can be seen in his accounts of the making of the work for which he was responsible. These go into technical detail, which will fascinate Kraftwerk aficionados, if not necessarily the general reader. He also provides excursive digressions on the Futurists, Bach and rocket pioneer Wernher Von Braun, which show his awareness of Kraftwerk's broader influences and context.

As someone steeped in 60s beat music and jazz and also trained in percussion at the Robert Schumann Conservatory, Bartos has a broad sensibility and can justly claim to have been responsible not just for the electronic percussion links in Kraftwerk but also for the shape and direction of the group's sound.

There are little insights into Hütter and Schneider's eccentricities – the former's penchant for black leather gloves, the latter's for bizarre shoes. We also learn of the time Schneider



almost burnt his father's house down at a barbecue. And then there's the endless cycling – for a group who were deliberately sweatless on stage, they probably generated more off it than any other rock or pop group of their generation.

Funny, cultured, detailed, *The Sound Of The Machine* at least partially lifts the lid on the doings of Düsseldorf's finest.



David Stubbs

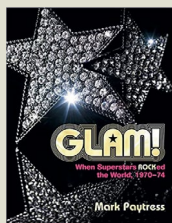


Marc Bolan: the patron saint of 70s glam.

Glam! When Superstars Rocked The World 1970-74

Mark Paytress OMNIBUS

Imagine the sensation of teenage occupation: the years that rock rampaged.



“His worst yet”, one *Record Mirror* reader (cited here) wailed of T. Rex’s 1974 hit *Teenage Dream*. “It sounded like someone on DRUGS.” The bittersweet joke here is that Bolan’s undervalued anthem, an anguished eulogy to the golden era of the UK’s glam-rock explosion, was less indicative of someone on drugs than pretty much every record and band that had graced (or cashed in on) the purple patch. Briefly, blazingly, everything went crazy. In the early 70s, pop and rock reacted to the extended-solo, earnest-guitar-hero late 60s with a blast of energy and swagger every bit as iconoclastic as its less well-dressed offspring punk. Glam fired a jolt of adrenalin up music’s rear end, and it vomited forth peacocks. Some were visionaries with the talent to use it as a launch pad. Some were in the right place at the right time and took their shot brilliantly – Sweet, Slade. Others surfed the wave with luck and likeability. And then there was Bolan, whose star seemed to soar and slump in almost exact sync with the movement, and whose premature death left him shining as its emblematic patron saint.

Glam! author Mark Paytress is well known as a Bolan biographer, but here he

covers the whole hullabaloo, as lightning was caught in a bottle and music burst every envelope in terms of electrifying, impactful, instant-gratification sound and flamboyant, licentious look. It’s a gorgeous, hefty book, blending history and background – *A Clockwork Orange*, Warhol, Gay Pride, colour TV – with sheer fan-club glee. The latter is celebrated with images that spark Proustian rushes more effectively than any thesis – covers of mags like *Popswop* and *Disco 45*, press cuttings and ads that reveal how swiftly glam blitzed the mainstream, even Peter Wyngarde aftershave ads, which speak to the evolution of camp and the new ideals within perceived masculinity.

Nominal hard-rock bands like Alice Cooper, Mott The Hoople and Faces dive in to the water because it looks so cool; chirpy chancers like Alvin Stardust, Mud and, to a degree, Elton John leap on to the bandwagon. All make glorious singles. If you were a teenager experiencing your musical awakening at that time, you had scant critical detachment and ingested the whole giddy sugar rush with delight. This book’s bump and grind will be good for your mind.

Chris Roberts

Jimi Hendrix: Every Album, Every Song

Emma Stott SONICBOND PUBLISHING

Compellingly thorough plunge into the great man’s catalogue.



One of the blessings, or occasionally handicaps, of the books in Sonicbond’s ‘On Track’ series is that few of them are written by people who write about music for their day jobs. Instead, fans, musicologists and academics take deep dives into a subject and their work, and even if new stories or quotes are thin on the ground some interesting angles can be found. Emma Stott may be an English teacher in her day job, but she brings some of the disciplines of literary criticism to her appraisal of Jimi Hendrix’s work.

The slightly dry, scholarly essay language (plenty of ‘furthermore’s, ‘indeed’s and ‘rather’s) is offset by the author’s perceptive dissection of Hendrix’s work – lyrics being a particular strong point – and having done her homework admirably. A wide range of apposite quotes are dug out from a variety of sources and archives to back up illuminating points about the origins of Hendrix’s playing and singing style and his evolution as a songwriter. Musically literate readers will also be pleased to learn that Stott has enough grasp of music theory to shed light on such thorny matters as the use of things such as the dyad and the ‘Hendrix chord’, E7#9.

A book well worth getting your teeth into.

Johnny Sharp

Paper Cuts: How I Destroyed The British Music Press And Other Misadventures

Ted Kessler WHITE RABBIT

Highly entertaining memoir from ex-NME writer and Q editor.

“Jew or Nazi”? That was Mark E Smith’s first question to Ted Kessler on learning of his name, in reference to his ancestry. In fact, Kessler’s father was a refugee from Nazi Austria. The author’s family background and upbringing, including a brutally violent spell in Paris, set the turbulent tone for Kessler’s memoir, which saw him bounce back from an arrest for theft to interviewing the likes of

Radiohead, Oasis, the Manic Street Preachers, Black Grape and, of course, Smith. Kessler is great on the background to such high-profile interviews, the occasional truculence of the artists, the liaisons with press officers who are often rock’n’roll characters in their own right.

By the time he has migrated to Q, however, it was in decline. Kessler outlines just how disastrous were attempts by marketing and management with no real understanding of the rock press to revive the magazine. Such efforts, rather than the writing, weakened Q to the point of extinction. Other magazines survived, Q died. Nonetheless, the blow was softened by a wonderful gesture from *The Beautiful South*’s Paul Heaton.

Never vindictive or score-settling, this is nonetheless an honest, revealing memoir.

David Stubbs

The Hellacopters: Kerosene In The Blood

Rudy Charis BLANC

Enthusiastic biography of the Swedish garage rockers.



There will forever be a generation of musicians for whom the past will be more enticing than what’s happening in the present. So while rock music mutates from one form to another with the passing of the years, the template of days gone by will act not only as an inspiration but also as a rule book. Ergo Sweden’s award-winning garage rockers The Hellacopters, whose back catalogue of high-octane nuggets is frozen in time while also remaining timeless.

Author Rudy Charis’s enthusiasm for The Hellacopters’ output is palpable on every one of the pages of this epic biography. Charting the band’s rise, dissolution and eventual re-formation, he delves deep into their inspirations and how the band harnessed them to break out of their domicile and onto the international stage.

Yet for all that, it would have benefitted enormously from a tighter edit and a decent translation. It was originally published in French, and one is left with the feeling that the text was fed through Google Translate with the hope that it would come out fine. Also, some outlandish claims are

unchallenged: Nicke Andersson was ahead of Amy Winehouse in the soul stakes. Really?

A missed opportunity.



Julian Marszalek

1-2 Cut Your Hair: The Story Of Johnny Moped

Simon Williams DAMAGED GOODS

Compelling chronicle of '77-vintage punk also-rans.



At the risk of stating the bleeding obvious, the UK punk scene harboured

an abundance of misfits. It's also fair to say that most were misfits by choice, simply replicating and updating the couture-based weirdness of Bowie/Roxy forebears. But Johnny Moped were something else. Style-wise, the Mopeds, and most especially their frontman Paul Halford (who, vocally speaking, closely mirrored an emotionally charged Alf Garnett) had no clue; for their Roxy club debut guitarist Slimy Toad shaved off half of his moustache. Yet these Croydon-based reprobates benefited from a friendship with Captain Sensible, sacked Chrissie Hynde, and despite having to kidnap their vocalist from a possessive older wife and in-laws in order to play gigs and record their *Cycledeleic* debut, were widely embraced as scene stalwarts and endure to this day.

Theirs is an incredible story, told beautifully with good humour, engaging style, tangible warmth and empathetic incredulity by ex-NME writer/Fierce Panda founder Simon Williams and, basically, comes highly recommended.



Ian Fortnam

Jethro Tull: Chronicles 1967-79

Laura Shenton WYMER

Handsomely illustrated, inky-raiding history of Ian Anderson and friends' imperial era.



One of the benefits of writing a book about a band like Jethro Tull is that their chief

creative force has never been backward in coming forward with his own stories, opinions and explanations regarding the substantial body of work they have turned out. During the band's first 12 years he and his

bandmates were regular fixtures in the music press, and were rarely shy of explaining what was going on inside and outside Tull world. And Anderson since, of course, has waxed lyrical about those times in great detail online and in publications such as this one.

So although Tull scholar Laura Shenton's A4-sized, souvenir-style book covering that period doesn't benefit from many first-person interviews, in the many hours she has clearly spent trawling the archives for contemporary quotes she has unearthed plenty of illuminating material. She lets their words tell the story, and the abundance of quality photos, including press ads and obscure press cuttings, add further vintage colour to the story.

There are no shortage of Tull books around now, including Anderson's own lyric book, but for hard-core fans (with deep pockets – it's £59.99) this one is a worthy addition to a section of your library now bulging like Anderson's codpiece.



Johnny Sharp

UFO – A Visual Biography

Martin Popoff WYMER

Phil Mogg and co. pictured through the decades.

This 224-page hardback takes a different path from that of Martin Popoff's two earlier UFO books by telling the full story (mostly) in pictures. But he does add background notes, opinions and key dates as years roll by and the band's line-up changes. Just as well, as not even Deep Purple's family tree is as complicated. When singer and canny lyricist Phil Mogg begins his delayed retirement after UFO complete their farewell tour later this year, he might reflect on that, and just how many people he hired to keep the band flying – not all of whom are pictured, thankfully.

There seems to be too many pages covering the side-projects, splinter groups and little-loved line-ups of 1982-2003, but they are part of the story. Image-wise, artwork and press ads play their part, but photos by the two men who shot the band best in their heyday – Fin Costello and Ross Halfin – are conspicuously absent. Some others, though, are good enough to make this book worthwhile.



Neil Jeffries

STEVE HACKETT GENESIS REVISITED



FOXTROT at FIFTY + HACKETT HIGHLIGHTS

SEPTEMBER 2022

09 SWANSEA ARENA

10 CARDIFF ST DAVID'S HALL

11 CAMBRIDGE CORN EXCHANGE

13 AYLESBURY FRIARS WATERSIDE

14 TORQUAY PRINCESS THEATRE

16 PORTSMOUTH GUILDHALL

17 BEXHILL DE LA WARR PAVILION

18 BIRMINGHAM SYMPHONY HALL

20 HULL CITY HALL

22 GATESHEAD SAGE

23 GLASGOW ROYAL CONCERT HALL

24 YORK BARBICAN

26 BUXTON OPERA HOUSE

27 GRIMSBY AUDITORIUM

28 NORTHAMPTON ROYAL & DERNGATE

30 SHEFFIELD CITY HALL

OCTOBER 2022

01 MANCHESTER O₂ APOLLO

03 SOUTHEND CLIFFS PAVILION

04 IPSWICH REGENT THEATRE

05 BATH FORUM

07 LEICESTER DE MONTFORT HALL

08 LIVERPOOL PHILHARMONIC

09 BRIGHTON CENTRE

11 BOURNEMOUTH PAVILION

12 LONDON EVENTIM APOLLO HAMMERSMITH

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A KILIMANJARO PRESENTATION
BY ARRANGEMENT WITH SOLO



Siouxsie Sioux:
hugely influential.

Siouxsie And The Banshees

There have been bands as prolific, and arguably some as wildly creative, but few have melded the two so well.

From the south-east suburbs, the so-called Bromley contingent of London's 70s punks – including the eventual songwriting partnership of vocalist Susan 'Siouxsie Sioux' Ballion and bassist Steven 'Severin' Bailey (along with friends Simon 'Six' Barker and Simone Thomas) – were standing behind the Sex Pistols during their notorious teatime TV incident of December 1976.

In fact it was a 19-year-old Siouxsie – with her blatantly sarcastic flirting at Bill Grundy eliciting the 53-year-old's creepy response: "We'll meet afterwards, shall we?" – that led Pistols guitarist Steve Jones to unleash his volley of fruity language. Things deteriorated rapidly for the Pistols' public profile, but Sioux left an imperious and indelible mark.

Two months earlier, Siouxsie and Severin threw together a band – with guitarist Marco Pirroni, who would later play with Adam Ant, and eventual Pistols bassist Sid Vicious on drums – for London's legendary 100 Club Punk Special two-day festival.

With the solidified line-up of drummer Kenny Morris and guitarist John McKay from 1977, Siouxsie And The Banshees were a popular live band. But they weren't signed until '78, following a graffiti campaign by

manager Nils Stevenson; London's record company buildings were daubed with: "Sign The Banshees: do it now."

Despite the longevity of the classic line-up – Sioux and the rhythm section of Severin and drummer Peter 'Budgie' Clarke – the Banshees burned through 10 guitarists. That fluctuating line-up aided diversity and rapid development of the Banshees' sound, but the inconsistency didn't cost them momentum; it's hard to think of another band with the prolific creativity to release albums with such quality and regularity.

The Banshees were at home in the fertile post-punk era, but their sound blurred psychedelia, avant and art-rock. One of the late-20th century's greatest British vocalists, Siouxsie remains highly influential both artistically and stylistically to countless bands and singers.

Following the band's split, Steve Severin became a film soundtrack composer, while Siouxsie and Budgie continued their art-rock side project The Creatures. In 2007, Siouxsie released her solo album *Mantaray*, and most recently duetted with Yoko Ono on *Walking On Thin Ice* at the 2013 Meltdown festival in London.

Alex Burrows

Essential Classics



Juju

POLYDOR, 1981

John McGeoch's career peak, *Juju* was the former Magazine guitarist's second album as a Banshee. His breathtaking assortment of styles on *Spellbound* is able to breathe despite the rhythm section's almighty assault. The brooding but comparatively light Doors-inspired *Arabian Nights* provides some relief before the terror. The nagging cold machinism of *Monitor* precedes their single darkest track, the frankly terrifying *Nightshift*. McGeoch's dissonant guitar is in desperate combat with the bleak brutalist repetition of Budgie's economical thud and Severin's stark bass. An unnerving but grandiose post-punk masterpiece.



A Kiss In The Dreamhouse

POLYDOR, 1982

Contrasting the darkness of *Juju*, the rich orchestration of *A Kiss In The Dreamhouse* leads with Severin's antagonistic high bass notes feeding into McGeoch's trademark finger-picking for Cascade's spectacular crescendo. The waltz of the Velvets-inspired *Melt!*, with its sparkling mandolin riff, and *Slowdive*'s experimental strings nod to an album ahead of its time. (The "Oh my god" three and a half minutes into *Slowdive* was a string player vocalising their exhaustion.) *Dreamhouse* was a creative high point for the band, showcasing a considerably evolved sound inside just four years. The Banshees were at the top of their game.

Superior Reputation cementing



The Scream

POLYDOR, 1978

Having progressed beyond standard punk rock with early singles *Hong Kong Garden* and *The Staircase (Mystery)*, the Banshees retained their Velvets-sieved-through-krautrock sound on their debut album. An early example of post-punk, it had an immediate influence on bands such as Joy Division and Soft Cell. The confrontational *Jigsaw Feeling* and abstruse *Overground* feature John McKay's angular guitar playing, while *Mirage* is a perfect avant-pop song, contrasting the uncompromising *Metal Postcard (Mittageisen)*. *The Scream* was characteristically bolshie Banshees but a brilliant bleeding-edge debut.



Kaleidoscope

POLYDOR, 1980

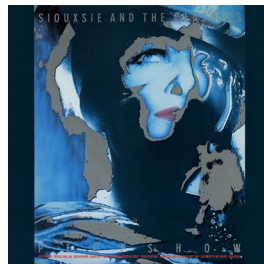
Bringing in idiosyncratic Slits drummer Budgie and guitarist John McGeoch proved serendipitous for the Banshees' third album. Pistols guitarist Steve Jones filled in on three tracks while in-demand McGeoch untangled himself from recording the Visage debut (*Kaleidoscope* was the third 1980 landmark album he co-wrote and played on, along with Magazine's *The Correct Use of Soap*). Minimalist yet engaging, *Kaleidoscope*'s spartan psychedelia, with its themes of psychological distress, and the unconventional hit single *Happy House*, showcased the innovative talents of Budgie and McGeoch.



Hyæna

POLYDOR, 1984

The Cure's Robert Smith was the reliable pair of guitar hands the Banshees needed following McGeoch's dismissal from the group after issues caused by his alcoholism. In the same way that his work with The Cure influenced Smith's co-writing with Severin on *Hyæna* (they had already worked together as The Glove by this point, releasing their only album *Blue Sunshine* in 1983), in turn *Hyæna* influenced The Cure's subsequent pop-psychedelia of *The Head On The Door*. The piano melody on *Hyæna*'s lead single, the prog-influenced *Swimming Horses*, was later re-used by Smith on The Cure's *Six Different Ways*.

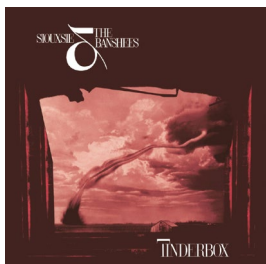


Peepshow

POLYDOR, 1988

Where post-punk meets German Expressionism. Like *Join Hands* and *JuJu*, *Peepshow* is conceptual in style. The impressively discordant *Peekabo* sets the tone. It sounds like a sonic freak show performed down the side alley of the Kit Kat Klub by fringe lunatics considered too outré to play inside. Severin's *The Killing Jar* is an underrated late-Banshees classic, with a devastatingly evocative lyric and lush string arrangement. *Peepshow* is further front-loaded with Severin's *Scarecrow* featuring his chuntering low-end metallic notes. Soundtrack for a Batman villain that was never made.

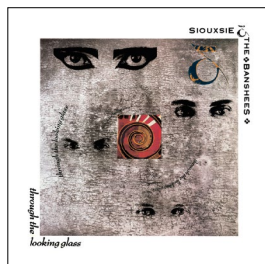
Good Worth exploring



Tinderbox

POLYDOR, 1986

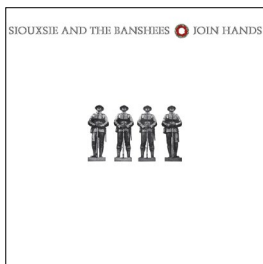
Guitarist John Valentine Carruthers, from post-punk industrial outfit Clock DVA, replaced Smith on the Banshees post-*Hyæna* stopgap EP *The Thorn*. *Tinderbox*, his first full-length, was a polar opposite to *Hyæna*, and the chiming electro-pop of lead single *Cities In Dust* scored the Banshees their first success in the States. The lyrically troubling *Candyman* is the closest the Banshees have come to a traditional goth sound, while the up-tempo *Sweetest Chill* features a distinctive circular melodic Carruthers riff. The ominous 92° expands the theme, but it's closer to electronica than to goth – albeit filtered through the Banshees unique back cat.



Through The Looking Glass

POLYDOR, 1987

Inspired by Bowie's *Pin Ups* album, The Banshees' own covers album *Through The Looking Glass* opens with a bravura version of Sparks's near-impossible-to-cover *This Town Ain't Big Enough For The Both Of Us*. Two single releases comprised the superbly menacing brass- and chimes-laden take on Iggy Pop's *The Passenger*, and a Middle-Eastern-inspired version of Dylan/Danko's *This Wheel's On Fire* with Carruthers's shrieking riff slicing through McCarrick's dazzling strings and Budgie's tom rolls. Kraftwerk's Ralf Hütter rated the cover of *Hall Of Mirrors* as "extraordinary". Cover versions, but made entirely their own.

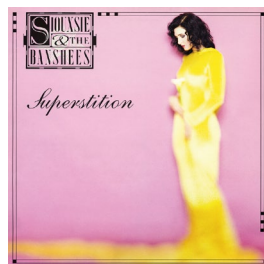


Join Hands

POLYDOR, 1979

A vague conceptual theme on the horrors of World War I. With its anguished unease, opener *Poppy Day* (taking its lyric from WWI poet John McCrae's *In Flanders Fields*) sets the tone with McKay's jarring guitar while Morris's snare fires useless bullets. The increasing sonic distress leads towards the surreal nightmarish tension of *Premature Burial*. Despite a guitar sound verging on white noise, the chilling *Playground Twist* is almost a reprieve. 'Ding-a-ling-a-fucking-ding.' Sioux yells on the challenging reinterpretation of *The Lord's Prayer*, harking back to the 20-minute improv the Banshees performed at the 1976 100 Club Punk Special.

Avoid



Superstition

POLYDOR, 1991

There is no such thing as a bad Banshees album, but if you leave one until last maybe make it this. They were still evolving their sound in the early 90s when Polydor pulled the plug despite *The Rapture*'s positive reception in 1995. From penultimate album the electronica-led *Superstition*, ravishing single *Kiss Them For Me*, featuring 20-year-old prodigy Talvin Singh on tabla at the outset of his prestigious career, is one of the band's greatest achievements. They'd spent over a decade constantly evolving their sound at a pace no one could outrun. *Kiss Them For Me* peaked at No.23 on the *Billboard* chart (No.32 in the UK), making it their biggest US success.

Essential Playlist

Mirage

The Scream

Metal Postcard (Mittageisen)

The Scream

Playground Twist

Join Hands

Happy House

Kaleidoscope

Christine

Kaleidoscope

Spellbound

JuJu

Arabian Knights

JuJu

Nightshift

JuJu

Cascade

A Kiss In The Dreamhouse

Melt!

A Kiss In The Dreamhouse

Slowdive

A Kiss In The Dreamhouse

Swimming Horses

Hyæna

Dazzle

Hyæna

Cities In Dust

Tinderbox

Sweetest Chill

Tinderbox

The Killing Jar

Peepshow

Scarecrow

Peepshow

Kiss Them For Me

Superstition



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 SAT 15 - BILSTON THE ROBIN
 FRI 21 - SHOREHAM ROPETACKLE
 SAT 22 SOUTHAMPTON 1865
 SUN 23 - BRISTOL FLEECE
 THU 27 - ISLINGTON O2 ACADEMY
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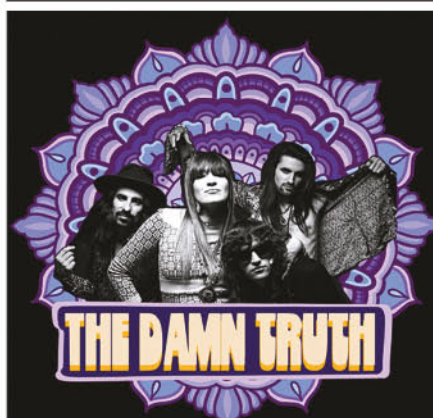
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 20 Bury St Edmunds Apex
 21 Newcastle Cluny*
 22 Glasgow Oran Mor
 25 Islington Union Chapel

*All shows seated except



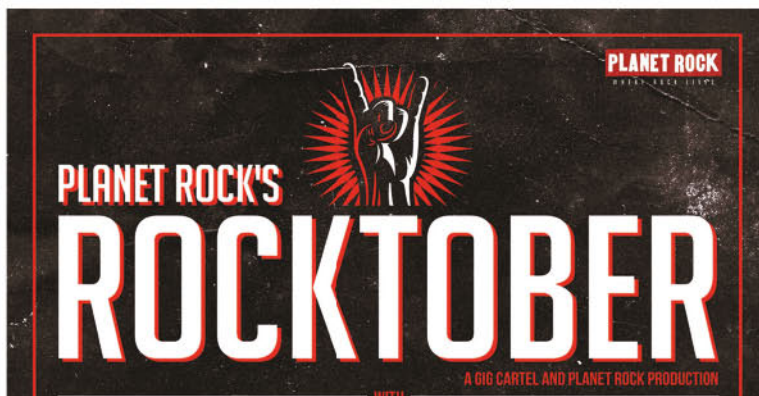
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 18 NORWICH WATERFRONT
 20 SOUTHAMPTON 1865*
 21 LIVERPOOL HANGER 34*
 22 SHEFFIELD O2 ACADEMY*
 23 CHESTER LIVE ROOMS
 25 NEWCASTLE THE CLUNY
 26 GLASGOW STEREO
 27 YORK FULFORD ARMS
 28 LONDON BLACK HEART



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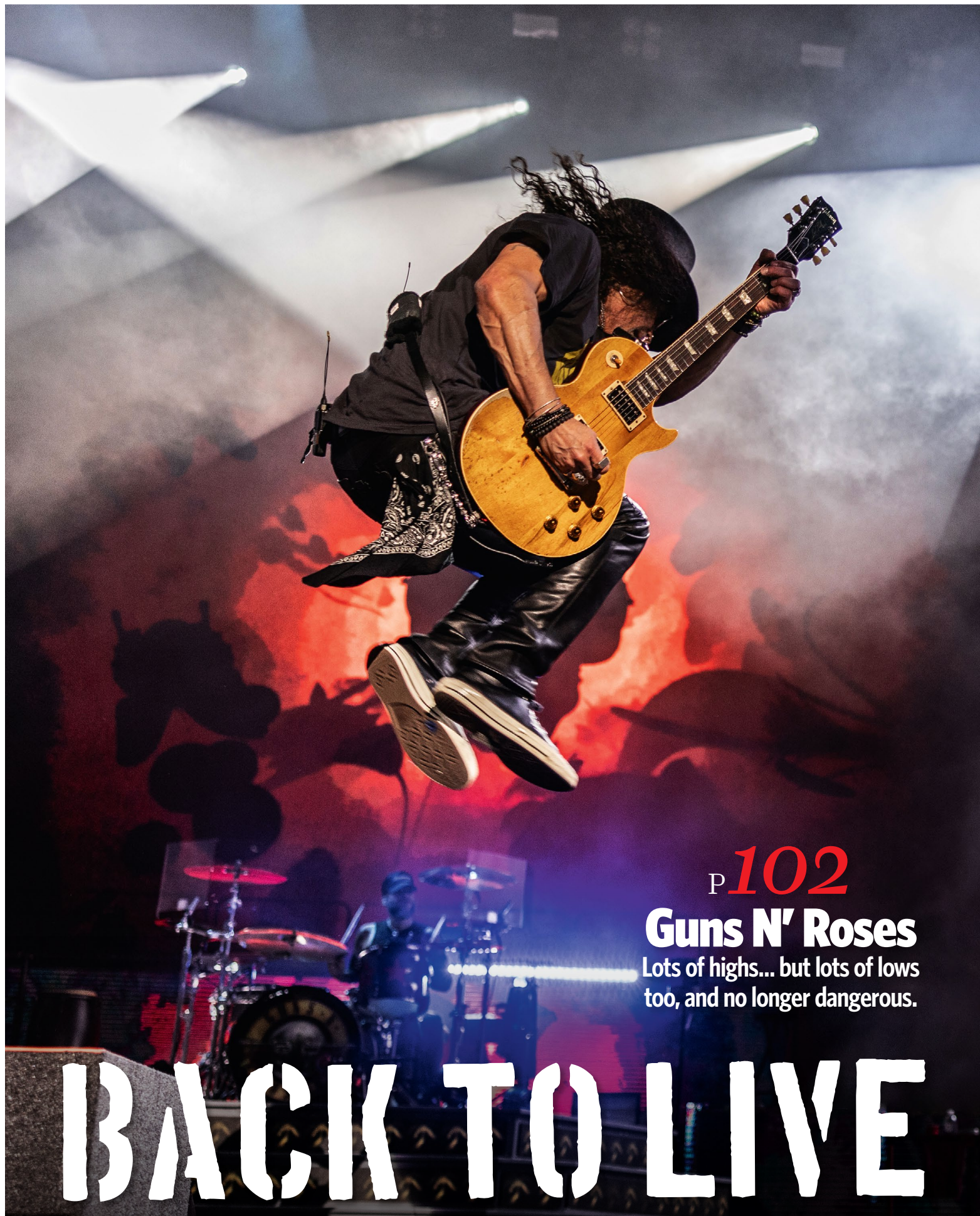
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P **102**

Guns N' Roses

Lots of highs... but lots of lows too, and no longer dangerous.

BACK TO LIVE

THE HIGH-VOLTAGE WHAT'S ON GUIDE

EDITED BY IAN FORTNAM (REVIEWS) AND DAVE LING (TOURS)

P **84** **INTERVIEWS**

P **89** **TOUR DATES**

P **94** **LIVE REVIEWS**



|||||
"This isn't Kiss,
it isn't Lordi.
It's not merely
a theatrical
band... We tell
a story. It's
a complete
entertainment
experience."

GWAR

If you're gearing up for one of their shows, you might want to consider taking an umbrella.

Blöthar The Berserker previews a new invasion of planet Earth by the interplanetary Barbarian warriors, with some heavyweight music soundtracking their battle cry.

You took the place of previous frontman Oderus Urungus in GWAR almost a decade ago. There were tales of a 'battle to the death'.

[Laughs] It wasn't a battle to the death. Oderus simply went on a long vacation, owing me a lot of yams, which is the currency that we use. He signed off. There was a Viking funeral. Whenever GWAR needs a new scum dog we just go to GWAR HQ in Antarctica where we store them, and we thaw one out. I woke up as the new spiritual leader and singer of GWAR. That was quite a revelation.

How has global warming affected the band's base in Antarctica?

That's how GWAR came to life. In the 1980s, all of the glam-metal bands that wore hairspray depleted the ozone layer. Things got warmer and warmer, eventually we thawed out. But now we're like polar bears, sitting on a tiny little island of ice. For that reason most of us don't live in Antarctica any more.

Where are you now?

[Laughs] Blöthar lives in Sarasota, Florida, with Brian

Johnson of AC/DC and Mick Jagger as roommates. I kid you not!

What do you say to those who believe GWAR should not exist without Oderus?

[Laughs even louder] Well, your family should not exist without your dead grandmother. Are the members of GWAR supposed to flush their lives down the toilet because one dude makes a mistake?

According to folklore, Oderus was fifty billion years old. As we Earthlings like to say, he had a good innings.

He really did. He had a good run. And we believe that Oderus is still with us in another plane of existence. He himself used to say that GWAR could live forever and out-survive all of us, and he probably will.

Although GWAR are not human beings, were you affected by the plague known as covid-19?

Yeah, it took its toll on us. I caught it. With us it's like when a puppy gets parvo, we become listless and disinterested in just about everything – even murder. But of course GWAR was responsible for covid-19.

You were?

Of course we were! We just couldn't stop messing around with pangolins [a type of scaly anteater].

Is the Earth doomed anyway?

The planet itself isn't doomed, but humanity is without question on its way out.

There's a new GWAR album, *The New Dark Ages*. What is its message?

Just open your eyes. Things are getting worse and worse. Humanity cannot keep pace with its own technological changes, ushering in an age of unimaginable disease and despair. Humans have always treated each other very poorly. If the Earth is the organism, surely humanity is the disease? Eventually it will be surrounded by antibodies and eliminated by Mother Nature herself.

There are plenty of people now who believe that music is free. What would your faithful manager, Sleazy P Martini, do to someone he caught downloading *New Dark Ages* for free from a dodgy website?

He would tell them: "Music is not free, music is slavery." Music just exists in the world, and it really is free. It's the branding that you pay for.

So you don't mind if somebody steals one of your albums?

As long as they're buying my underwear, and my personal brand of Blöthar milk, I really don't care.



For Earthlings tempted to experience the GWAR live circus for the first time, can you tell us what it entails.

A live performance from GWAR is unlike anything they've ever seen. This isn't Kiss, it isn't Lordi. It's not merely a theatrical band. Our show is more like *Jesus Christ Superstar* or something. We tell a story. It's a complete entertainment experience.

On an average night, how many buckets of blood are projected over the audience?

Oh, hundreds and hundreds of gallons.

Also, Blöthar has udders that spray fluid on to the audience.

We cover the humans in all sorts of bodily excretions, and they love it. And if they love it, they'll come back.

Maybe the audience should bring umbrellas?

Actually, that isn't a bad idea. Oh, and by the way, Blöthar has four udders that look like human weeners, but they're not weeners at all. In fact, he also has a sideways vagina.

When GWAR tire of this shitty little planet of ours and move on to the next, how would they like to be remembered?

As the greatest live rock'n'roll band that ever existed. Eventually we're going to do it. Go to see GWAR and it's like a three-ring gangbang circus. All of that with rock'n'roll. We should be recognised for upping the bar of theatrical rock'n'roll. **DL**

*GWAR's UK tour begins in Dover on August 8. The documentary *This Is GWAR* is streaming on Shudder.*



Toyah

The queen of punk looks forward to seaside R-Fest fun.

The queen of punk on the genre's longevity, life with hubby Robert Fripp, and those videos the pair made.

You're appearing at R-Fest, a sister event to the annual punk bash Rebellion Fest, on the promenade in front of Blackpool Tower. That sounds idyllic – as long as the weather is kind.

In August that should be okay. I'm on in the afternoon, and the location sounds fantastic because it will be inclusive to everyone on holiday in Blackpool.

In 2022, what is the essence of punk rock? Why is it still 'a thing'?

It's about rebellious energy. And Rebellion Festival is for those who question, people that want to know what's going on in the world.

With a forty-years-plus career from which to choose what to play, what kind of a set do you have planned for R-Fest?

There's a lot to cherry-pick from, and I'm very aware of the age-range. Going on at two in the afternoon, I feel a responsibility to do the singles, but it will be a hugely broad spectrum. With my touring for the rest of the year we will be doing something much more specific, full of textures, flavours and colour.

You did a lot to keep yourself busy in lockdown, including making last summer's album *Posh Pop*.

It's been one of the most successful albums of my career. It went to Number One in thirty-six album charts. *Posh Pop* is commentary-based; when you've got Simon Darlow [long-time Toyah collaborator], myself and Robert Fripp on an album, it's not going to be fluffy.

And then there were those videos – the Sunday Lunch clips. You almost crashed the internet with

you and your husband Robert in tutus dancing to *Swan Lake* on the lawn.

They were timed pretty well, I think. We made them at a point when people needed to laugh.

How many takes did you have to do for the *Swan Lake* clip?

We got it second take, and we knew it would be absolutely stunning. At first Robert was doubtful, but he realised it was great British comedy. It was also a response to being stuck inside.

Has the concept of the Sunday Lunch clips got a shelf life?

Well, we're not facing that yet, because there's a potential stage show and a movie being written about the whole thing. But taking into account our ages... yes, of course it has [laughs].

Another of the main talking points was that – to put this delicately – you don't mind showing off your figure?

As an actress I was naked many times within the context of film. Only my husband sees that now. But it's also great social comment about the power of age and the naked form. It's not difficult for me.

You and Robert's relationship has captured the heart of the nation – the queen of punk and the emperor of prog.

We've gone from being very private to an internet sensation, and I find it extraordinary that Robert has embraced it all. He takes it seriously in a very beautiful way. He's won the hearts of every woman in the world.

What's something we don't know about Robert?

He's learning to cook. He's a very, very good house husband. When he wants to be. **DL**

Toyah appears at R-Fest on August 5.



Bouchard Brothers

Meet the siblings, solo artists and co-founders of Blue Öyster Cult.

Drummer Albert and guitarist and bassist Joe Bouchard were members of Blue Öyster Cult during the New York band's golden era in the 70s and 80s. This month they're playing eight unplugged dates across the UK, featuring BÖC and solo material plus some storytelling.

Albert, you were a member of BÖC precursors Soft White Underbelly, and Joe, you joined the band for their debut album in January 1972. You must have some amazing memories of the meteoric rise that followed?

Albert [laughing] It was about as meteoric as a turtle.

Joe: It took a number of years to become a platinum-selling band. We pounded the pavement; there were a lot of tours. Everyone from Spirit to the James Gang to Rod Stewart.

Albert, you left in 1981, and were replaced by the band's lighting designer for a what was a disastrous display at Monsters Of Rock. There's a legendary photo of Eric Bloom jumping up and down on his commemorative plaque of the event.

Albert: Now that it's forty-one years ago, I try to take a long view. I worked hard on the album we did with [producer] Martin Birch [*Fire Of Unknown Origin*], and the group didn't understand the sacrifices I was making, so I lashed out. That was the crux of it.

Joe, what caused your departure in 1985?

Joe: For me it was a different situation. I was burned out from being on 'the endless tour'. I wanted to do some different things, and I certainly did, including playing with Spencer Davis.

You both have current solo albums out: Joe's *American Rocker*, and Albert's *Imaginos II: Bombs Over Germany*.

Joe: We are putting out one solo record after another. Right now Albert is making his third consecutive double album.

Albert: That [the double album] was the original vision that Sandy Pearlman [manager] and I had for *Imaginos* [released as a single-set in '88]. It was going to be like *Star Wars*. But of course that didn't happen.

On these upcoming dates you're playing acoustically, with music and stories. Will the set be a mix of solo material plus BÖC classics?

Albert: Yeah. We've got forty-five songs, so we vary the set-list from night to night because some fans will attend several shows.

It's hard to imagine the BÖC standard *Godzilla* being played 'unplugged'.

Joe: Kasim Sulton [a touring member of BÖC] devised a really cool acoustic arrangement of that song, so we stole it from him.

Albert, you went back to BÖC several times, and even played a small part on their most recent album, but Joe, after leaving you never returned.

Joe: I did a couple of things with them. There was a tribute gig to Allen Lanier [in 2016, in honour of the keyboard player and rhythm guitarist who died three years before], which was amazing.

Albert: I got kicked out of the band, that was the difference. So when they asked me to come back I was like: [enthusiastically] "Oh yeah." Whereas when they asked Joe, who had quit, he was more like... [shrugs shoulders].

A couple of the dates – London and Newcastle – are with the current incarnation of Angel. You must know Frank, Punky and the current guys very well? (Just as this issue went to press the Angel tour was cancelled – Ed.)

Albert: Yeah, of course. It's just like the 1970s...

Joe: ...Only we're opening for them this time. But we have no problem with that. It happens all the time in rock'n'roll.

Are there any plans to make an album as the Bouchard Brothers?

Albert: That's the joy of our situation. We can do whatever we like, so who knows? **DL**

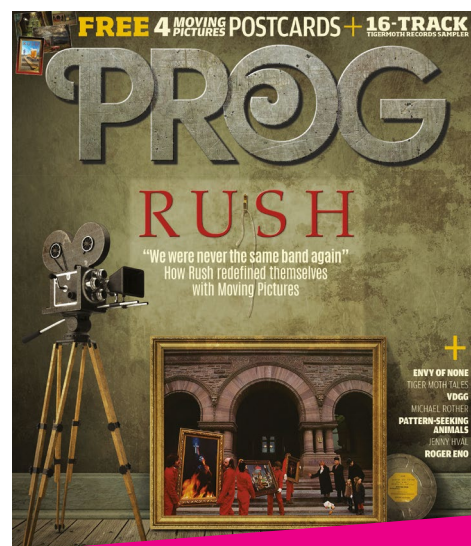
The tour commences in Glasgow on August 9.

For the stories behind the best albums and
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Tour Dates

THE AFGHAN WHIGS

Brighton	Concorde 2	Jul 23
Suffolk	Latitude Festival	Jul 24
Manchester	Cathedral	Nov 4
Glasgow	St Luke's Church	Nov 5
London	Camden Koko	Nov 6

ALEXISONFIRE, BOSTON MANOR

Cardiff	Great Hall	Oct 14
Manchester	Academy	Oct 16
Glasgow	Barrowland	Oct 17
Leeds	Academy	Oct 19
Brighton	Dome	Oct 20
London	Brixton Academy	Oct 22

ALTER BRIDGE, HALESTORM, MAMMOTH WVH

Nottingham	Motorpoint Arena	Dec 5
Glasgow	Hydro Arena	Dec 6
Dublin	3 Arena	Dec 8
Manchester	AO Arena	Dec 9
Birmingham	Resorts World Arena	Dec 11
London	O2 Arena	Dec 12

AMARANTHE, BEYOND THE BLACK

Manchester	The Ritz	Oct 11
London	Kentish Town Forum	Oct 12

AMORPHIS, ELUVEITIE

Dublin	Academy	Nov 21
Glasgow	QMU	Nov 22
Manchester	The Ritz	Nov 23
London	Kentish Town Forum	Nov 24

ANGEL

Stoke-on-Trent	Eleven	Aug 11
London	Camden Underworld	Aug 12
Nottingham	Rescue Rooms	Aug 13
Glasgow	Cathouse	Aug 16
Newcastle	Trillians	Aug 17
Bilston	Robin 2	Aug 18

Recommended

ANTHRAX, MUNICIPAL WASTE

Birmingham	Academy	Sep 27
Manchester	Academy	Sep 29
Glasgow	Academy	Sep 30
Newcastle	City Hall	Oct 1
Leeds	Academy	Oct 3
Nottingham	Rock City	Oct 4
Bristol	Academy	Oct 6
London	Brixton Academy	Oct 8

ANTI-FLAG

Southampton	Engine Rooms	Aug 3
Blackpool	Rebellion Fest	Aug 4
Nottingham	Rescue Rooms	Aug 5
London	Highbury Garage	Aug 6

ANVIL

Edinburgh	Bannerman's Bar	Oct 1
Newcastle	Trillians	Oct 2
Huddersfield	The Parish	Oct 3
Chester	Live Rooms	Oct 4
Bilston	Robin 2	Oct 6
Leeds	Key Club	Oct 7
Belfast	Voodoo	Oct 8
Dublin	Grand Social	Oct 9
Nuneaton	Queens Hall	Oct 11
Norwich	Waterfront Studio	Oct 12
London	Islington Academy	Oct 13
Machynlleth	Red Lion	Oct 14
Swansea	Sin City	Oct 15
Bridgewater	Cobblestones	Oct 16
Southampton	1865	Oct 18
Bournemouth	The Anvil	Oct 19
Hastings	The Crypt	Oct 24

ARENA

Southampton	1865	Sep 29
Sheffield	Corporation	Sep 30
London	Islington Powerhaus	Oct 1
Bilston	Robin 2	Oct 2
Kinross	Green Hotel	Oct 3
Liverpool	Academy	Oct 4

BATTLE BEAST

London	Islington Academy	Sep 14
Wolverhampton	KK's Steel Mill	Sep 15
Manchester	Club Academy	Sep 16

BIFFY CLYRO, ARCHITECTS

Leeds	First Direct Arena	Nov 5
Glasgow	The Hydro	Nov 6

Dublin	3 Arena	Nov 8
Belfast	SSE Arena	Nov 9
Birmingham	Resorts World Arena	Nov 11
London	O2 Arena	Nov 12
Cardiff	Motorpoint Arena	Nov 14
Bournemouth	BIC	Nov 15

BIG BIG TRAIN

Aylesbury	Friars Waterside	Sep 2
Leeds	HRH Prog Festival	Sep 3

THE BLACK CROWES, REEF

Dublin	3 Arena	Sep 21
Manchester	Apollo	Sep 24
London	Brixton Academy	Sep 26/27

BLACK STAR RIDERS, MICHAEL MONROE, PHIL CAMPBELL & THE BASTARD SONS

Nottingham	Rock City	Feb 13
Norwich	UEA	Feb 15
Ipswich	Corn Exchange	Feb 16
Manchester	The Ritz	Feb 17
Wolverhampton	KK's Steel Mill	Feb 18
Leeds	Academy	Feb 19
Cardiff	Tramshed	Feb 21
Bristol	Academy	Feb 22
Glasgow	SWG3	Feb 23
Newcastle	City Hall	Feb 24
London	Shepherd's Bush Empire	Feb 26

BLUE ÖYSTER CULT

Leicester	De Montfort Hall	Oct 18
Newcastle	City Hall	Oct 19

BONHAM-BULLICK

Worcester	Huntingdon Hall	Sep 16
Barnoldswick	Music & Arts Centre	Sep 18
Kinross	Green Hotel	Sep 29
Newcastle	Trillians	Sep 30
Hull	Wrecking Ball Arts Centre	Oct 1
Henley	Crooked Billet	Oct 26

GRAHAM BONNET BAND, BETH BLADE & THE FABULOUS DISASTERS

Wolverhampton	KK's Steel Mill	Jul 28
London	Tufnell Park Boston Music Rooms	Jul 29
Ebbw Vale	Steelhouse Festival	Jul 30
Manchester	Academy 3	Jul 31

BOUCHARD BROTHERS

Glasgow	Hard Rock Café	Aug 9
Edinburgh	Bannerman's Bar	Aug 10
Blackpool	Waterloo Music Bar	Aug 11
London	Camden Underworld	Aug 12
Nuneaton	Queens Hall	Aug 14
Hull	Wrecking ball	Aug 15
Newcastle	Trillians	Aug 17
Stoke-on-Trent	Eleven	Aug 18

LINDSEY BUCKINGHAM

London	Palladium	Oct 1
Glasgow	SEC Armadillo	Oct 3
Liverpool	Philharmonic Hall	Oct 4
Dublin	The Helix	Oct 6

BULLET FOR MY VALENTINE, JINGER, ATREYU

Cambridge	Corn Exchange	Feb 26
Bristol	Academy	Feb 28
Liverpool	Mountford Hall	Mar 1
Newcastle	City Hall	Mar 3
Glasgow	Barrowland	Mar 4
Leeds	Academy	Mar 6
Birmingham	Academy	Mar 7
Southampton	Guildhall	Mar 8
Swansea	Arena	Mar 10
London	Chalk Farm Roundhouse	Mar 11

THE CADILLAC THREE, LINDSAY ELI

Glasgow	Academy	Aug 26
Manchester	Academy	Aug 27
Leicestershire	Long Road Festival	Aug 28
Newcastle	City Hall	Aug 30
Cardiff	Great Hall	Sep 2
Birmingham	Institute	Sep 3
Nottingham	Rock City	Sep 5
London	Chalk Farm Roundhouse	Sep 6

CAMEL (2023)

Manchester	Apollo	Jun 2
Edinburgh	Usher Hall	Jun 3
Dublin	Vicar Street	Jun 4
Southampton	Guildhall	Jun 6
Aylesbury	Friars Waterside	Jun 7
Birmingham	Symphony Hall	Jun 8
London	Hammersmith Apollo	Jun 10

THE DARKNESS / BLACK STONE CHERRY



Justin Hawkins and co. get permission to land at a venue near you early next year, this time co-headlining with a Cherry on top.

See below for dates, currently January 28 to February 4.

CARAVAN

Brighton	Old Market	Oct 7
Gloucester	Guildhall	Oct 8
Hampshire	Haymarket Theatre	Oct 9
Basingstoke	Haymarket	Oct 9
Bilston	Robin 2	Oct 13
Leeds	Brudenell Social Club	Oct 14
Liverpool	Epstein Theatre	Oct 15
Buxton	Pavilion	Oct 16
Bury St Edmunds	Apex	Oct 20
Newcastle	The Cluny	Oct 21
Glasgow	Oran Mór	Oct 22
Stamford	Corn Exchange	Oct 23
London	Highbury Union Chapel	Oct 25

CATS IN SPACE

Wimborne	Tivoli	Sep 30
Dover	Booking Hall	Oct 2
Nottingham	Rescue Rooms	Oct 13
Cambridge	Junction	Oct 14
Tavistock	The Wharf	Oct 15
Southampton	Engine Rooms	Oct 16
Sheffield	Corporation	Oct 22
Reading	Sub 89	Oct 26
Stoke-on-Trent	Eleven	Oct 27
Buckley	Tivoli	Oct 29

CHEAP TRICK, RAVENEY

Newcastle	Boiler Shop	Sep 30
Manchester	Academy	Oct 2
Bristol	Academy	Oct 4
Wolverhampton	KK's Steel Mill	Oct 5
London	Shepherd's Bush Empire	Oct 6

CLUTCH

Glasgow	Academy	Nov 11
Newcastle	City Hall	Nov 12
Leeds	Academy	Nov 13
Exeter	Great Hall	Nov 15
Brighton	Dome	Nov 16
Bristol	Academy	Dec 13
Birmingham	Academy	Dec 14
Manchester	Academy	Dec 15
Nottingham	Rock City	Dec 16
London	Chalk Farm Roundhouse	Dec 17

JOHN COGHAN'S QUO

Aldershot	West End Centre	Sep 16
Portsmouth	Wedgwood Rooms	Sep 17
Minehead	Butlins Quo Convention	Sep 24

COHEED AND CAMBRIA, THRICE, TOUCHE AMORE

Bristol	Academy	Oct 14
Birmingham	Academy	Oct 15
London	Brixton Academy	Oct 16
Manchester	Academy	Oct 18
Nottingham	Rock City	Oct 19
Glasgow	SWG3 Galvanizers	Oct 20

COLOSSEUM

London	Chelsea Under The Bridge	Aug 25
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ROSALIE CUNNINGHAM

Brighton	Patterns	Oct 6
Chelmsford	Social Club	Oct 7
Bath	Arts Centre	Oct 8
Stockton	Georgian Theatre	Oct 21
Hebden Bridge	Trades Club	Oct 22
Glasgow	Nice & Sleazy	Oct 23

Edinburgh	Voodoo Rooms	Oct 24
Hull	Adelphi	Oct 25
Newcastle	Trillians	Oct 26
Preston	The Ferret	Oct 28
Birmingham	Institute 3	Oct 29
Bristol	Thekla	Oct 30
Ramsgate	Music Hall	Nov 3
Winchester	Railway Inn	Nov 4
Hastings	The Piper	Nov 5
Northampton	Black Prince	Nov 11

THE CURE

Dublin	3 Arena	Dec 1
Belfast	SSE Arena	Dec 2
Glasgow	The Hydro	Dec 4
Leeds	First Direct Arena	Dec 6
Birmingham	Utilita Arena	Dec 7
Cardiff	Motorpoint Arena	Dec 8
London	Wembley Arena	Dec 11-13

THE DAMNED

London	Hammersmith Apollo	Oct 28/29
Manchester	Apollo	Nov 3
Glasgow	Academy	Nov 4
Birmingham	Academy	Nov 5

THE DAMN TRUTH

Norwich	Waterfront	Oct 18
Chester	Live Rooms	Oct 23
Newcastle	The Cluny	Oct 25
Glasgow	Stereo	Oct 26
York	Fulford	Oct 27
London	Camden Black Heart	Oct 28

DARE, TROY REDFERN

Leeds	Brudenell Social Club	Oct 6
Newcastle	The Cluny	Oct 7
Glasgow	Garage	Oct 8
Bury St Edmunds	The Apex	Oct 13
Nottingham	Rescue Rooms	Oct 14
Bilston	Robin 2	Oct 15
Shoreham-by-Sea	Ropetackle Arts Centre	Oct 21
Southampton	1865	Oct 22
Bristol	The Fleece	Oct 23
London	Islington Academy	Oct 27
Manchester	Academy	Oct 28
Newbury	Arlington Arts Centre	Oct 29

THE DARKNESS / BLACK STONE CHERRY

Cardiff	Motorpoint Arena	Jan 28
Liverpool	M&S Bank Arena	Jan 29
Glasgow	OVO Arena	Jan 30
Birmingham	Resorts World Arena	Jan 31
Manchester	AO Arena	Feb 2
Leeds	First Direct Arena	Feb 3
London	Wembley Arena	Feb 4

DEEP PURPLE, BLUE ÖYSTER CULT

London	O2 Arena	Oct 20
Glasgow	The Hydro	Oct 22
Leeds	First Direct Arena	Oct 23
Birmingham	Arena	Oct 25
Manchester	Arena	Oct 2.....6

DROPKICK MURPHYS, THE INTERRUPTERS

Belfast	Telegraph Building	Jan 13
Dublin	3 Arena	Jan 14
Newcastle	City Hall	Jan 16

CLASSIC
Rock
RECOMMENDS

Glasgow	The Hydro	Jan 17
Manchester	Victoria Warehouse	Jan 18
Cardiff	Motorpoint Arena	Jan 20
London	Wembley Arena	Jan 21
Birmingham	Academy	Jan 22

THE DUST CODA, THE HOWLING TIDES

London	Camden Powerhaus	Oct 28
Norwich	Brickmakers	Oct 29
Bristol	The Fleece	Oct 30
Buckley	Tivoli	Nov 4
Derby	The Venue	Nov 5
Brighton	Hope And Ruin	Nov 6

ELECTRIC BOYS

Stoke-on-Trent	Eleven	Aug 23
London	Camden Underworld	Aug 24
Swansea	Hangar 18	Aug 25
Machynlleth	Y Lleu Coch	Aug 26
Bradford	Nightrain	Aug 27
Sheffield	HRH Sleafest Festival	Aug 28
Newcastle	Trillians	Aug 30
Edinburgh	Bannerman's Bar	Aug 31
Glasgow	Hard Rock Café	Sep 1
Bilston	Robin 2	Sep 2
Blackpool	Waterloo Music Bar	Sep 3

ESOTERICA

London	King's Cross Scala	Sep 22
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EVANESCENCE, WITHIN TEMPTATION

London	O2 Arena	Nov 14
Birmingham	Utilita Arena	Nov 15
Glasgow	The Hydro	Nov 17
Leeds	First Direct Arena	Nov 19

SAMANTHA FISH, WILLE & THE BANDITS

Oxford	Academy	Oct 15
Manchester	Academy	Oct 16
Brighton	Chalk	Oct 18
Edinburgh	Queen's Hall	Oct 19
Wolverhampton	KK's Steel Mill	Oct 20
Glasgow	St Luke's Church	Oct 21
Southampton	The Brook	Oct 22
Nottingham	Rock City	Oct 23
Cardiff	Tramshed	Oct 24
Newcastle	Wylam Brewery	Oct 25
London	Shepherd's Bush Empire	Oct 26
Bath	Komedia	Oct 27

FLOGGING MOLLY

Manchester	The Ritz	Aug 16
Birmingham	Institute	Aug 17
London	Kentish Town Forum	Aug 18
Dublin	Vicar Street	Aug 20

FLORENCE BLACK

Southampton	Joiners Arms	Oct 2
Norwich	Brickmakers	Oct 3
London	Camden Black Heart	Oct 5
Nottingham	Rescue Rooms	Oct 6
Birmingham	The Flapper	Oct 7
Manchester	Rebellion	Oct 10
Newcastle	The Cluny	Oct 11
Glasgow	Stereo Café Bar	Oct 12
Leeds	Key Club	Oct 13
Bristol	The Exchange	Oct 16

FM

Buckley	Tivoli	Aug 12
Manchester	Firestorm Festival	Aug 13
Stoke-on-Trent	Eleven	Aug 14
Southampton	1865	Aug 19
Plymouth	Junction	Aug 20
Bristol	Thekla	Aug 21
Colne	British Rhythm & Blues Fest	Aug 27
Sutton-in-Ashfield	The Diamond	Aug 29
Bradford	Nightrain	Oct 28
Grimsby	Yardbirds Club	Oct 29
Blackpool	Waterloo Music Bar	Oct 30
Dover	Booking Hall	Nov 27

FOCUS

London	New Cross Inn	Aug 21
Cardiff	Earl Haig Club	Aug 25
Sheffield	Corporation	Aug 27
Holmfirth	Picturedrome	Jun 28
Leeds	Brudenell Social Club	Nov 9
Glasgow	The Ferry	Nov 10
Gateshead	The Sage	Nov 11
Kinross	Green Hotel	Nov 12/13
Ely	Maltings	Nov 21
Southampton	1865	Nov 23
Bilston	Robin 2	Nov 24
Falmouth	Princess Pavilion	Nov 25
Lewes	Conservative Club	Nov 26
London	Chelsea Under The Bridge	Apr 20

FOO FIGHTERS: THE TAYLOR HAWKINS TRIBUTE CONCERT

London	Wembley Stadium	Sep 3
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FOZZY, ESCAPE THE FATE, SCARLET REBELS

Manchester	New Century Hall	Nov 4
Birmingham	Institute	Nov 5

Nottingham	Rock City	Nov 6
Dublin	National Stadium	Nov 8
Belfast	Ulster Hall	Nov 9
Swansea	Patti Pavilion	Nov 10
Bournemouth	Academy	Nov 11
Bristol	Academy	Nov 12
Glasgow	SWG3	Nov 13
London	Kentish Town Forum	Nov 14

THE GASLIGHT ANTHEM

London	Wembley Arena	Aug 18
Manchester	Apollo	Aug 19
Edinburgh	Academy	Aug 20
Birmingham	Academy	Aug 21
Dublin	National Stadium	Aug 23
Belfast	Telegraph Building	Aug 24

GONG, OZRIC TENTACLES

Leicester	Academy 2	Nov 16
Brighton	Concorde 2	Nov 17
Sheffield	Academy 2	Nov 18
Liverpool	Academy 2	Nov 19
Bristol	Trinity	Nov 20
London	Camden Electric Ballroom	Nov 23
Oxford	Academy 2	Nov 24
Leeds	Brudenell Social Club	Nov 25
Manchester	Academy 2	Nov 26
Glasgow	Grange	Nov 27
Birmingham	Academy 2	Nov 29
Norwich	Epic Studios	Nov 30
Cambridge	Junction	Dec 1
Falmouth	Princess Pavilion	Dec 2
Bournemouth	Old Fire Station	Dec 3

GRAND SLAM, SONS OF LIBERTY

Grimsby	Yardbirds	Sep 15
Edinburgh	Bannerman's Bar	Sep 16
Glasgow	Ivory Blacks	Sep 17
Newcastle	Trillians	Sep 18
London	Camden Underworld	Sep 21
Nuneaton	Queens Hall	Sep 24

GUN

Bradford	Nightrain	Nov 30
London	Islington Academy	Dec 1
Nuneaton	Queens Hall	Dec 2
Blackpool	Waterloo Music Bar	Dec 4
Bath	Komedia	Dec 5
Sunderland	Firestation	Dec 6
Galashiels	Mac Arts Centre	Dec 7
Glasgow	Barrowland	Dec 10
Aberdeen	Lemon Tree	Dec 11

GWAR

Dover	Booking Hall	Aug 8
Brighton	Chalk	Aug 9
Bristol	The Fleece	Aug 10
Catton Park	Bloodstock Festival	Aug 12
Norwich	Waterfront	Aug 13
Leeds	Key Club	Aug 14
Glasgow	Garage	Aug 16
Manchester	Club Academy	Aug 17
London	Tufnell Park Dome	Aug 18

STEVE HACKETT

Swansea	Arena	Sep 9
Cardiff	St David's Hall	Sep 10
Cambridge	Corn Exchange	Sep 11
Aylesbury	Waterside	Sep 13
Torquay	Princess Theatre	Sep 14
Portsmouth	Guildhall	Sep 16
Bexhill-on-Sea	De La Warr Pavilion	Sep 17
Birmingham	Symphony Hall	Sep 18
Hull	City Hall	Sep 20
Gateshead	The Sage	Sep 22
Glasgow	Royal Concert Hall	Sep 23
York	Barbican	Sep 24
Buxton	Opera House	Sep 26
Grimsby	Auditorium	Sep 27
Northampton	Derrigate	Sep 28
Sheffield	City Hall	Sep 30
Manchester	Apollo	Oct 1
Southend-on-Sea	Cliffs Pavilion	Oct 3
Ipswich	Regent Theatre	Oct 4
Bath	Forum	Oct 5
Leicester	De Montfort Hall	Oct 7
Liverpool	Philharmonic	Oct 8
Brighton	Centre	Oct 9
Bournemouth	Pavilion	Oct 11
London	Hammersmith Apollo	Oct 12

JUSTIN HAYWARD

Weston-super-Mare	Playhouse	Sep 11
Birmingham	Town Hall	Sep 12
Darlington	Hippodrome	Sep 13
New Brighton	Floral Pavilion	Sep 15
Bournemouth	Pavilion	Sep 17
Eastleigh	Concorde Club	Sep 18
London	Highbury Union Chapel	Sep 19
Basingstoke	The Anvil	Sep 21
Northampton	Derrigate	Sep 22
Hastings	White Rock Theatre	Sep 23

HEADSWIM

London	Camden Underworld	Oct 7
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FOO FIGHTERS: THE TAYLOR HAWKINS TRIBUTE CONCERT



It's gonna be a biggie, with big names, big songs and big surprises, as the Fools and friends remember their late drummer.

London

Wembley Stadium

Sep 3

Recommended

H.E.A.T, MASON HILL, COLLATERAL

Leeds	Warehouse	Oct 14
Wolverhampton	KK's Steel Mill	Oct 15
Swansea	Patti Pavilion	Oct 16
Nottingham	Rescue Rooms	Oct 17
London	Camden Electric Brixton	Oct 18

HEAVY PETTIN

Newcastle	Trillians	Aug 21
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JACK J HUTCHINSON

Winchester	Railway Inn	Oct 5
Norwich	Brickmakers	Oct 8
Milton Keynes	Craftud Arms	Oct 9
Bristol	Thunderbolt	Oct 14
Edinburgh	Bannerman's Bar	Oct 19
Blackpool	Waterloo Music Bar	Oct 20
Newcastle	Trillians	Oct 21
St Austell	Band Club	Nov 12

BILLY IDOL, TELEVISION

Manchester	AO Arena	Oct 13
Cardiff	Motorpoint Arena	Oct 17
London	Wembley Arena	Oct 19
Glasgow	The Hydro	Oct 21
Birmingham	Resorts World Arena	Oct 23
Leeds	First Direct Arena	Oct 25

INCUBUS

Birmingham	Academy	Sep 28
London	Royal Albert Hall	Sep 29/30
Manchester	Apollo	Oct 2

INGLORIOUS, A NEW TOMORROW

Stoke-on-Trent	Sugarmill	Sep 15
Manchester	Academy 3	Sep 16
Newcastle	Riverside	Sep 17
Dunfermline	PJ Malloys	Sep 18
Hebden Bridge	Trades Club	Sep 20
Hull	The Welly	Sep 21
Wolverhampton	KK's Steel Mill	Sep 22
Merthyr	Red House	Sep 23
Norwich	Brickmakers	Sep 25
Nottingham	Rescue Rooms	Sep 26
Milton Keynes	Craftud Arms	Sep 27
London	Camden Underworld	Sep 28
Bristol	Thekla	Sep 30
Tavistock	The Wharf	Oct 1
Gloucester	Guildhall	Oct 2
Bournemouth	Old Fire Station	Oct 3

LAMB OF GOD, KREATOR, THY ART IS MURDER, GATECREEPER

London	Brixton Academy	Dec 13
Glasgow	Academy	Dec 14
Birmingham	Academy	Dec 15
Bristol	Academy	Dec 16
Manchester	Academy	Dec 18

LAURENCE JONES

Hull	The Social	Sep 9
Newcastle	The Cluny	Sep 10
Glasgow	Ivory Blacks	Sep 11
Liverpool	Arts Club Loft	Sep 14

Frome	Cheese And Grain	Sep 16
Manchester	Band On The Wall	Sep 17
Wavendon	The Stables	Sep 18
St Ives	Guildhall	Sep 19
Wolverhampton	KK's Steel Mill	Sep 20
Oxford	The Bullingdon	Sep 22
Lincoln	The Drill	Sep 23
Aldershot	West End Centre	Sep 24
Derby	Flowerpot	Sep 30
Sittingbourne	Bournefest	Oct 1
Cardiff	The Globe	Oct 6
Southampton	1865	Oct 7
Carlisle	Blues Festival	Oct 8
York	The Crescent	Oct 9
Blackpool	Waterloo Music Bar	Oct 13
Whitby	Pavilion Theatre	Oct 14
Chester	Live Rooms	Oct 20
Grimsby	Yardbirds Club	Oct 21
Leicester	The Musician	Oct 28
London	Oxford Street 100 Club	Oct 28

KINGDOM OF MADNESS: CLASSIC MAGNUM

Bradford	Nightrain	Oct 7
Leicester	Y Theatre	Oct 8
London	Oxford Street 100 Club	Oct 28

KING KING

Lytham St Annes	Lowther Pavilion	Jul 28
Holmfirth	Picturedrome	Jul 29
Castleton	Devil's Arse Cave	Jul 30
Northampton	Roadmender	Oct 16th
Southampton	1865	Oct 20
Liverpool	Grand Central Hall	Oct 21
Glasgow	Barrowland	Mar 2

KING KING, CATS IN SPACE, RAINBREAKERS

Chepstow	Castle	Aug 20
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KING'S X, TROPE

Southampton	The Brook	Sep 16
Holmfirth	Picturedrome	Sep 17
Newcastle	Wylam Brewery	Sep 18
Glasgow	Garage	Sep 20
Nottingham	Rescue Rooms	Sep 22
Cambridge	Junction	Sep 23
Wolverhampton	KK's Steel Mill	Sep 24
London Islington	Assembly Hall Sep 26	
Manchester	Academy 2	Sep 27
Cardiff	Tramshed	Sep 28

CORKY LAING PLAYS MOUNTAIN

London	Oxford Street 100 Club	Nov 15
Oxford	The Bullingdon	Nov 16
Blackpool	Waterloo Music Bar	Nov 17
Edinburgh	Bannerman's Bar	Nov 18
Sedgefield	Parish Hall	Nov 19
Whitby	Blues, Rhythm & Rock Festival	Nov 20

LAMB OF GOD, KREATOR, THY ART IS MURDER, GATECREEPER

London	Brixton Academy	Dec 13
Glasgow	Academy	Dec 14
Birmingham	Academy	Dec 15
Bristol	Academy	Dec 16
Manchester	Academy	Dec 18

LIFESIGNS

Glasgow	Ivory Blacks	Aug 15
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Manchester	Rebellion	Aug 16
Liverpool	Zanzibar	Aug 17
Milton Keynes	Craufurd Arms	Aug 18

LILLIAN AXE, RIOT ACT, KIM MELVILLE

Bilston	Robin 2	Aug 22
Newcastle	Trillians	Aug 23
Bradford	Nightrain	Aug 24
Edinburgh	Bannerman's Bar	Aug 25
Swansea	Hangar 18	Aug 26
London	Camden Underworld	Aug 27
Sheffield	HRH Sleafest Festival	Aug 28

AYNSLEY LISTER

Kendal	Brewery Arts Centre	Jul 27
London	Putney Half Moon	Jul 29
Uckfield	Blues & Roots Fest	Jul 30
Farnham	Maltings	Aug 4
Frome	Cheese & Grain	Aug 5
Colne	R&B Festival	Aug 27
Swindon	Wyvern Theatre	Sep 6
Chislehurst	Beaverwood Club	Sep 7
Southampton	1865	Sep 8
Wimborne	Tivoli	Sep 9
Darlington	R&B Club	Sep 11
Leicester	The Musician	Sep 23
Louth	Blues Club	Sep 24
Sittingbourne	Bournefest	Oct 1

ERJA LYYTINEN, CHANTEL Mcgregor

Leeds	Brudenell Social Club	Feb 3
Wavendon	The Stables	Feb 5
Bilston	Robin 2	Feb 6
London	Oxford Street 100 Club	Feb 11

MACHINE HEAD, AMON AMARTH, THE HALO EFFECT

Nottingham	Motorpoint Arena	Sep 8
Cardiff	Motorpoint Arena	Sep 9
London	Wembley Arena	Sep 10
Manchester	AO Arena	Sep 12
Dublin	3 Arena	Sep 13

MAGENTA, TIGER MOTH TALES

Fletching	Trading Boundaries	Oct 21/22
Bilston	Robin 2	Oct 23
London	Tufnell Park Boston Music Rooms	Oct 29
Cardiff	The Globe	Oct 30
St Helens	Citadel	Nov 4
Sheffield	Local Authority	Nov 5

MAGNUM

Dublin	Opium	Sep 9
Belfast	Limelight	Sep 10
Glasgow	Garage	Sep 12
Sheffield	Leadmill	Sep 13
Nottingham	Rock City	Sep 14
Holmfirth	Picturedrome	Sep 16
Manchester	Academy 2	Sep 17
Leeds	Brudenell Social Club	Sep 18
Bristol	The Fleece	Sep 19
Southampton	Engine Rooms	Dec 6
Cardiff	Tramshed	Dec 7
Wolverhampton	KK's Steel Mill	Dec 10

MARILLION

Blackburn	King George's Hall	Sep 18
Glasgow	Royal Concert Hall	Sep 19
York	Barbican	Sep 21
Southampton	Guildhall	Sep 22
Aylesbury	Friars Waterside	Sep 24
Hanley	Victoria Hall	Sep 25
Sheffield	City Hall	Sep 27
Brighton	Dome	Sep 28
London	Hammersmith Apollo	Sep 30

ERIC MARTIN (UNPLUGGED)

Edinburgh	Bannerman's Bar	Aug 6
Glasgow	Hard Rock Café	Aug 7
Newcastle	The Cluny	Aug 8
Leeds	Brudenell Social Club	Aug 10
Blackpool	Waterloo Music Bar	Aug 12
Dungannon	Live On The Hill	Aug 13
Coventry	Arches	Aug 14
Bilston	Robin 2	Aug 16
Swansea	Hangar 18	Aug 20
Leicester	The Musician	Aug 22
London	Tufnell Park Boston Music Room	Aug 23
Machynlleth	Y Lleu Coch	Aug 24
Stoke-on-Trent	Eleven	Aug 27
Sheffield	HRH Sleafest Festival	Aug 28
Chesterfield	Real Time Live	Aug 31

MASSIVE

Bury St Edmunds	Just Push Play Festival	Jul 30
Norwich	Brickmakers	Jul 31
Nottingham	Salutation	Aug 2
Manchester	Gullivers	Aug 3
Newcastle	Trillians	Aug 4
Glasgow	Ivory Blacks	Aug 5
Sheffield	Corporation	Aug 6
Blackpool	Waterloo Music Bar	Aug 7
Cardiff	Fuel	Aug 10
Brighton	Hope & Ruin	Aug 11
Exeter	Cavern	Aug 12

Southampton	Nozfest	Aug 13
Newark	Stonedead Festival	Aug 26
London	Camden Black Heart	Aug 28

CHANTEL Mcgregor

Buxton	Blues Festival	Aug 6
Chislehurst	Beaverwood Club	Aug 11
Great Yarmouth	St George's Theatre	Aug 12
London	Oxford Street 100 Club	Sep 2
Newbury	Arlington Arts Centre	Sep 9
Louth	Riverhead Theatre	Sep 10
Selby	Town Hall	Sep 16
Leamington Spa	Temperance	Oct 6
Birmingham	Asylum	Oct 7
Cornwall	Rocks Festival	Oct 8
Halifax	Albany Arcade	Oct 15
Morecambe	The Platform	Oct 29
Hull	Adelphi	Nov 4
Whitby	Rocks Festival	Nov 18
Sevenoaks	Stag Theatre	Dec 9

THE MENTULLS

Kinross	Green Hotel	Oct 29
Fleet	The Harlington	Nov 6
Bury	The Met	Nov 26

MINISTRY

London	Shepherd's Bush Empire	Nov 2
Glasgow	SWG3 TV Studio	Nov 3
Dublin	National Stadium	Nov 4
Manchester	Damnation Festival	Nov 5

MONSTER TRUCK, THOSE DAMN CROWS

Dover	Booking Hall	Sep 29
Wolverhampton	KK's Steel Mill	Sep 30
Oxford	Academy	Oct 2
Manchester	The Ritz	Oct 5
Glasgow	Garage	Oct 6
Newcastle	Riverside	Oct 7
Cambridge	Junction	Oct 10
London	Shepherd's Bush Empire	Oct 11
Brighton	Concorde 2	Oct 12
Cardiff	Great Hall	Oct 15
Sheffield	Corporation	Oct 16
Nottingham	Rock City	Oct 17

MUDHONEY

Manchester	The Ritz	Sep 7
Glasgow	SWG3	Sep 8
Nottingham	Rock City	Sep 9
London	Camden Electric Ballroom	Sep 10
Bristol	Academy	Sep 11
Brighton	Concorde 2	Sep 12

FANTASTIC NEGRITO

London	Camden Jazz Café	Jul 26/27
Malmesbury	WOMAD Festival	Jul 28

NIGHTWISH, BEAST IN BLACK, TURMION KÄTILÖT

London	Wembley Arena	Nov 21
Birmingham	Resorts World Arena	Nov 22
Dublin	3 Arena	Nov 23

OPETH

London	Hammersmith Apollo	Nov 18
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PARKWAY DRIVE

London	Alexandra Palace	Sep 30
Manchester	AO Arena	Oct 1
Nottingham	Motorpoint Arena	Oct 2
Cardiff	Motorpoint Arena	Oct 3

PAVEMENT

Leeds	Academy	Oct 17
Glasgow	Barrowland	Oct 18
Edinburgh	Usher Hall	Oct 19
Manchester	Apollo	Oct 20
London	Chalk Farm Roundhouse	Oct 22-25
Dublin	Vicar Street	Nov 10

PORCUPINE TREE

London	Wembley Arena	Nov 11
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PRETTY BOY FLOYD

Edinburgh	Bannerman's Bar	Aug 22
Belfast	Voodoo	Aug 24
Stoke-on-Trent	Eleven	Aug 25
London	Camden Black Heart	Aug 26
Sheffield	Academy	Aug 28
Bilston	Robin 2	Aug 29

THE PRETTY RECKLESS

Glasgow	Barrowland	Oct 26
Manchester	Academy	Oct 27
Newcastle	City Hall	Oct 29
Birmingham	Academy	Oct 30
Bristol	Academy	Nov 1
Southampton	Guildhall	Nov 2
Norwich	UEA	Nov 3
London	Brixton Academy	Nov 5

FÉLIX RABIN

Blackpool	Waterloo Music Bar	Aug 25
Sheffield	The Greystones	Aug 26

ROXY MUSIC



Forget any 'Ferry as lounge-lizard crooner' preconceptions you might have, just listen to the brilliant (Roxy) music.

See below for dates. Currently October 10, 12 and 14.

Colne	Blues Festival	Aug 27
Chester	Live Rooms	Aug 28

Recommended

RAGE AGAINST THE MACHINE

Edinburgh	Royal Highlands Centre	Aug 24
Leeds	Festival	Aug 26
Reading	Festival	Aug 28

DAN REED NETWORK

Glasgow	Garage	Aug 30
Birmingham	The Mill	Aug 31
Leeds	Warehouse	Sep 1
Nottingham	Rock City	Sep 2
Liverpool	Grand Central Hall	Sep 3
Manchester	Academy 2	Sep 5
London	Camden Electric Ballroom	Sep 6
Cardiff	Tramshed	Sep 7
Southampton	Engine Rooms	Sep 8

ROSE TATTOO

London	Islington Assembly Hall	Jul 25
Birmingham	Institute 2	Jul 26
Glasgow	SWG3	Jul 27

ROXY MUSIC

Glasgow	Hydro	Oct 10
Manchester	AO Arena	Oct 12
London	O2 Arena	Oct 14

SANCTUARY

London	Camden Underworld	Aug 20
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JOE SATRIANI

Birmingham	Symphony Hall	May 12
Gateshead	The Sage	May 13
Manchester	Bridgewater Hall	May 14
Bexhill-on-Sea	De La Warr Pavilion	May 16
Glasgow	Academy	May 17

SAXON, DIAMOND HEAD

Ipswich	Regent	Nov 11
Southampton	Guildhall	Nov 12
Bexhill-on-Sea	De La Warr Pavilion	Nov 13
Cardiff	St David's Hall	Nov 14
Bath	Forum	Nov 15
Cambridge	Corn Exchange	Nov 16
Newcastle	City Hall	Nov 18
Blackburn	King's George Hall	Nov 19
Aberdeen	Music Hall	Nov 20
Glasgow	Barrowland	Nov 21
Hull	City Hall	Nov 22
York	Barbican	Nov 23
Leicester	De Montfort Hall	Nov 25
London	Chalk Farm Roundhouse	Nov 26

MICHAEL SCHENKER, HEAVY PETTIN

Glasgow	QMU	Aug 26
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SEPULTURA, SACRED REICH, CROWBAR

Glasgow	QMU	Nov 1
Manchester	The Ritz	Nov 2
Dublin	Academy	Nov 3
Wolverhampton	KK's Steelmill	Nov 4
London	Camden Electric Ballroom	Nov 5

THE SHEEPDOGS

Bristol	Thekla	Oct 7
Manchester	Gorilla	Oct 8
London	Camden Electric Ballroom	Oct 9

KENNY WAYNE SHEPHERD

Bristol	Academy	Oct 15
Bexhill-on-Sea	De La Warr Pavilion	Oct 16
London	Shepherd's Bush Empire	Oct 18
Warrington	Parr Hall	Oct 20
Edinburgh	Queens Hall	Oct 21
Sheffield	Academy	Oct 22
Gateshead	Tyne Theatre	Oct 23

SHINEDOWN, ASKING ALEXANDRIA, ZERO 9:36

Cardiff	Motorpoint Arena	Nov 26
Manchester	Apollo	Nov 27
Nottingham	Motorpoint Arena	Nov 29
Glasgow	Academy	Nov 30
London	Wembley Arena	Dec 1

SIKTH, PALM READER

Manchester	Academy 2	Nov 25
London	Camden Electric Ballroom	Nov 26

SKID ROW, WINGER, PHIL X & THE DRILLS, COLLATERAL

Wolverhampton	KK's Steel Mill	Oct 19
Brighton	Chalk	Oct 20
Cardiff	Y Plass	Oct 21
Bristol	Academy	Oct 23
London	Kentish Town Forum	Oct 24
Nottingham	Rock City	Oct 25
Manchester	The Ritz	Oct 27
Sheffield	Academy	Oct 28
Liverpool	Grand Central Hall	Oct 29
Glasgow	Academy	Oct 31
Newcastle	Northumbria University	Nov 1
Cambridge	Junction	Nov 3
Great Yarmouth	HRH Festival	Nov 4
Norwich	Epic Studios	Nov 18

SNAKE OIL & HARMONY: DANNY VAUGHN AND DAN REED

Edinburgh	Bannermans Bar	Nov 24
Glasgow	The Attic	Nov 25
Blackpool	Waterloo Music Bar	Nov 27
Chester	Live Rooms	Nov 29
Stoke-on-Trent	Eleven	Dec 1
Newport	The Patriot	Dec 2
Newcastle	The Cluny	Dec 3
London	Highbury The Grace	Dec 4
Bilston	Robin 2	Dec 6
Nottingham	Rescue Rooms	Dec 7
Sheffield	Local Authority	Dec 8
Bradford	Nightrain	Dec 9

BRUCE SPRINGSTEEN & THE E STREET BAND

Dublin	RDS Arena	May 5, 7
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STATUS QUO

Aberdeen	PSJ Live	Nov 25
Glasgow	SECC	Nov 26
Leeds	First Direct Arena	Nov 28
Brighton	Centre	Nov 30
Bournemouth	BIC	Dec 1
London	Wembley Arena	Dec 3

STRANGLERS

Blackpool	Rebellion Festival	Aug 5
Limerick	Big Top	Sep 22
Dublin	Olympia	Sep 23
Belfast	Limelight	Sep 24

COREY TAYLOR, CHERRY BOMBS

London	Palladium	Oct 17
Hull	Bonus Arena	Oct 19
Manchester	BEC Arena	Oct 21
Swansea	Arena	Oct 21

TEARS FOR FEARS

Hove	County Ground	Jul 22
Cardiff	Castle	Jul 23
Hatfield	House	Jul 24
Exeter	Powderham Castle	Jul 26

Recommended

TEDESCHI TRUCKS BAND

Dublin	Helix	Nov 2
London	Palladium	Nov 4-6
Manchester	Academy	Nov 9
Glasgow	Academy	Nov 10

GEORGE THOROGOOD & THE DESTROYERS

York	Barbican	Jul 24
Birmingham	Symphony Hall	Jul 26
Nottingham	Royal Concert Hall	Jul 27
London	Shepherds Bush Empire	Jul 29
Liverpool	Philharmonic Hall	Jul 30
Manchester	Bridgewater Hall	Jul 31

THREE DAYS GRACE, 10 YEARS

Cardiff	Y Plas	Sep 14
London	Kentish Town Forum	Sep 15
Manchester	Academy	Sep 16
Glasgow	SWG3	Sep 18
Birmingham	Academy	Sep 19

TRANSATLANTIC

London	Kentish Town Forum	Jul 27
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MARTIN TURNER EX-WISHBONE ASH

Bath	Chapel Arts Centre	Sep 9
Darlington	Forum Music Centre	Sep 16
Petworth	Leconfield Hall	Sep 17
Chislehurst	Beaverwood Club	Sep 22
Deal	Astor Theatre	Sep 23
Colchester	Arts Centre	Sep 24
Gravesend	Red Lion	Sep 25
Nuneaton	Queens Hall	Oct 1
Diss	Corn Hall	Oct 13
Knaresborough	Frazer Theatre	Oct 14
Lowdham	Village Hall	Oct 15
Hockley	The Sundry	Nov 11

TYGERS OF PAN TANG

Newcastle	The Cluny	Aug 26
Newport	The Patriot	Oct 7
Southampton	1865	Oct 10
Bilston	Robin 2	Nov 10
Norwich	Waterfront	Nov 11
London	Camden Black Heart	Nov 12

URIAH HEEP

Glasgow	Royal Concert Hall	Sep 30
Nottingham	Rock City	Oct 2
Manchester	Bridgewater Hall	Oct 3
London	Palladium	Oct 5
Cambridge	Corn Exchange	Oct 6
Gateshead	The Sage	Oct 8
York	Barbican	Oct 9
Birmingham	Symphony Hall	Oct 10
Cardiff	St David's Hall	Oct 11

VOLA, VOYAGER

Bristol	The Fleece	Sep 27
Manchester	Rebellion	Sep 28
London	Highbury Garage	Sep 29

VOLBEAT, SKINDRED, NAPALM DEATH

Dublin	3 Arena	Dec 12
Glasgow	The Hydro	Dec 15
Leeds	First Direct Arena	Dec 16
Cardiff	Motorpoint Arena	Dec 17
Nottingham	Motorpoint Arena	Dec 19
London	Wembley Arena	Dec 20

WHEN RIVERS MEET

Cardiff	Clwb Ifor Bach	Oct 14
Bristol	Academy	Oct 15
Gloucester	Guildhall	Oct 16
London	Shepherd's Bush Empire	Oct 18
Huddersfield	Parish	Oct 21
Sheffield	Academy	Oct 22
York	Crescent	Oct 23
Liverpool	Arts Club	Oct 29
Wavendon	The Stables	Oct 30

CJ WILDHEART, GRAND THEFT AUDIO, SCOTT SORRY

Glasgow	Classic Grand	Sep 9
Newcastle	Riverside	Sep 10
Manchester	Rebellion	Sep 11
Leeds	Brudenell Social Club	Sep 13
Bristol	The Fleece	Sep 15
Cardiff	Globe	Sep 16
Exeter	Phoenix Arts Centre	Sep 17
Norwich	Epic Studios	Sep 19
Birmingham	Institute	Sep 20
Brighton	Concorde 2	Sep 21
Southampton	The Brook	Sep 23
London	Shoreditch Xoyo	Sep 24

WISHBONE ASH

Leicester	Y Theatre	Oct 15
Bury St Edmunds	The Apex	Oct 17
Norwich	Epic Studios	Oct 18
Dorking	Grand Hall	Oct 19
London	Islington Academy	Oct 21
Bilston	Robin 2	Oct 22
Leeds	Brudenell Social Club	Oct 23
Kendal	Brewery Arts Centre	Oct 25
Carlisle	Old Fire Station	Oct 26
Glasgow	The Ferry	Oct 27
Edinburgh	Queens Hall	Oct 28
Lochgelly	Centre	Oct 29
Aberdeen	Lemon Tree	Oct 30
Stockton-on-Tees	The ARC	Nov 2
Lytham St Annes	Lowther Pavilion	Nov 3
Bury	The Met	Nov 4
Holmfirth	Picturedrome	Nov 5
Wavendon	The Stables	Nov 6
Shoreham-by-Sea	Ropetackle Arts Centre	Nov 8
Southampton	The Brook	Nov 9
Wimborne	Tivoli	Nov 10
Exeter	Phoenix Arts Centre	Nov 11
Frome	Cheese & Grain	Nov 12
Aberdare	Coliseum Theatre	Nov 13
Gloucester	Guildhall	Nov 15
Leamington Spa	Assembly	Nov 16
Liverpool	Academy	Nov 17
Buxton	Opera House	Nov 18

Y&T

Norwich	Waterfront	Oct 25
Southampton	The Brook	Oct 26
London	Islington Assembly Hall	Oct 28
Wolverhampton	KK's Steel Mill	Oct 29
Holmfirth	Picturedrome	Oct 30
Glasgow	Garage	Nov 3
Newcastle	Academy	Nov 4
Nottingham	Rock City	Nov 5
Cardiff	Tramshed	Nov 6

ZEAL & ARDOR

Colchester	Arts Centre	Nov 6
Brighton	Concorde 2	Nov 7
Bristol	Trinity Centre	Nov 8
Manchester	Academy 2	Nov 9
Glasgow	Oran Mór	Nov 11
Wolverhampton	KK's Steel Mill	Nov 13
London	Brixton Electric	Nov 13

MIKE ZITO, ALBERT CASTIGLIA

Carlisle	Brickyard	Oct 9
Edinburgh	Voodoo Rooms	Oct 10
Birmingham	Jam House	Oct 11
Newcastle	The Cluny	Oct 14
Hartlepool	South Durham WMC	Oct 15
Devizes	Long Street Blues Club	Oct 16
Sittingbourne	Bourne Music Club	Oct 17
London	Putney Half Moon	Oct 18
Southampton	1865	Oct 19

Festivals

BINGLEY WEEKENDER THE PIXIES, PRIMAL SCREAM, THE LIBERTINES, MORE

Bradford & Bingley	Rugby Club	Aug 5-7
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BLOODSTOCK FESTIVAL LAMB OF GOD, MERCYFUL FATE, DIMMU BORGIR, BEHEMOTH, MORE

Catton Park, Derbyshire		Aug 11-14
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COLNE BLUES, RHYTHM & ROCK FESTIVAL AYNLEY LISTER, CHANTEL MCGREGOR, FELIX RABIN, MORE

Colne	Hippodrome Theatre	Aug 27
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CORNWALL ROCKS TYGERS OF PAN TANG, ROCK GODDESS, GRAND SLAM, MORE

Looe	Tencreek Holiday Park	Oct 7-9
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CROPREDY FESTIVAL STEVE HACKETT, CLANNAD, TREVOR HORN, MORE

Oxfordshire	Cropredy Village	Aug 11-13
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WHEN RIVERS MEET



If their description of their debut album as "a bit Bad Company-ish" floats your boat, then dive in and catch them live.

See below for dates. Currently October 14 to October 30.

DOMINION FESTIVAL CRADLE OF FILTH, BLIND GUARDIAN, SODOM, MORE

Durham	Ushaw House	Jul 29-31
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FIRESTORM ROCK FESTIVAL WAYWARD SONS, PHIL CAMPBELL, THOSE DAMN CROWS, MORE

Manchester	Whitebottom Farm	Aug 12-14
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GLASGOW BLUES RHYTHM & ROCK FESTIVAL FULL HOUSE, CHANTEL MCGREGOR, STEVIE NIMMO, MORE

Glasgow	Oran Mór	Nov 6
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GREAT BRITISH RHYTHM & BLUES FESTIVAL ANIMALS & FRIENDS, FM, THE RIC LEE BAND, MORE

Colne	Various venues	Aug 26-28
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HARD ROCK HELL SKID ROW, THE DARKNESS, VANDENBURG, MORE

Great Yarmouth	Vauxhall Holiday Park	Nov 3-6
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HARD ROCK HELL NWOCR SCREAMING EAGLES, TRUCKER DIABLO, WHEN RIVERS MEET, MORE

Leicester	Academy	Jan 21/22
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HARD ROCK HELL PROG BIG BIG TRAIN, THE FLOWER KINGS, JOHN LEES' BJH, MORE

Sheffield	Academy	Sep 3/4
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HARD ROCK HELL SLEAZE MICHAEL MONROE, HARDCORE SUPERSTAR, PRETTY BOY FLOYD, MORE

Sheffield	Academy	Aug 27/28
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HARD ROCK HELL SPRING BREAK HOUSE OF LORDS, CRASHDIET, CANDLEMASS, MORE

Great Yarmouth	Vauxhall Holiday Park	Mar 8-12
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JUST PUSH PLAY FESTIVAL PHIL CAMPBELL & THE BASTARD SONS, EMPYRE, THESE WICKED RIVERS, MORE

Bury St Edmunds	Apex	Jul 30
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KENDAL CALLING SUPERGRASS, STEREOPHONICS, THE DUST CODA, MORE

Kendal	Lowther Deer Park	Jul 28-31
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LITTLE ORCHARD FESTIVAL KULA SHAKER, FEEDER, MORE

Penhallow (Truro)	Healeys Cyder Farm	Sep 9-11
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KNOTFEST.COM SYLOSIS, ORBIT CULTURE, SPIRIT WORLD, MORE

Birmingham	The Mill	Aug 10
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THE LONG ROAD THE CADILLAC THREE, GRETCHEN PETERS, MARTY STUART, MORE

Leicestershire	Stanford Hall	Aug 26-28
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LOOE BLUES, RHYTHM & ROCK FESTIVAL ELLES BAILEY, CLIMAX BLUES BAND, LAURENCE JONES, MORE

Looe	Tencreek Holiday Park	Dec 2-4
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MONSTERFEST GUN, MASON HILL, VIRGINMARYS, MORE

Inverness	One Touch Theatre	Oct 26-29
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A NEW DAY FESTIVAL JETHRO TULL, TEN YEARS AFTER, COLOSSEUM, MORE

Faversham	Mount Ephraim Gardens	Aug 19-21
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RADAR FESTIVAL DIRTY LOOPS, HAKEN, PLINI, MORE

Guildford	Casino	Jul 29-31
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READING AND LEEDS FESTIVALS RAGE AGAINST THE MACHINE, BRING ME THE HORIZON, ENTER SHIKARI, MORE

Reading	Richfield Avenue	Aug 26-28
Leeds	Bramham Park	Aug 26-28

REBELLION FESTIVAL THE STRANGLERS, BAD RELIGION, STIFF LITTLE FINGERS, MORE

Blackpool	Winter Gardens	Aug 4-7
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R-FEST STRANGLERS, HAWKWIND, GARY NUMAN, MORE

Blackpool	Promenade	Aug 4-7
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STEELHOUSE FESTIVAL SAXON, MICHAEL SCHENKER, EUROPE, MORE

Ebbw Vale	Hafod-y-Dafal Farm	Jul 29-31
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STONEDEAF FESTIVAL MICHAEL SCHENKER, H.E.A.T, THOSE DAMN CROWS, MORE

Newark	Showground	Aug 27
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TOMORROW'S GHOSTS FIELDS OF THE NEPHILIM, NEW MODEL ARMY, BALAAM & THE ANGEL, MORE

Whitby	Pavilion	Oct 28-30
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WEYFEST OZRIC TENTACLES, CAST, MORE

Tilford	Rural Life Living Museum	Aug 19-21
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WHITBY BLUES, RHYTHM & ROCK FESTIVAL AYNLEY LISTER, CORKY LAING, ELLES BAILEY, MORE

Whitby	Pavilion	Nov 19, 20
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WHITBY ROCKS CHANTEL MCGREGOR, GERRY JABLONSKI, SONS OF LIBERTY

Whitby	Pavilion	Nov 18
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WINTERSTORM FESTIVAL VANDENBERG, MOLLY HATCHET, BLAZE BAYLEY, MORE

Tron	Concert Hall	Nov 26/27
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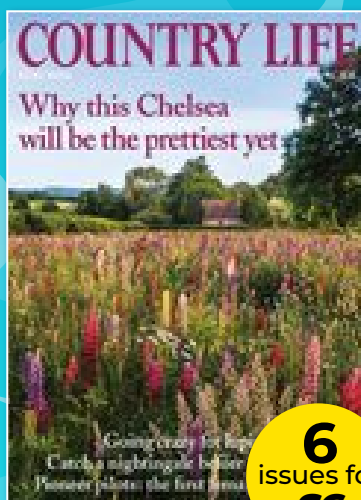


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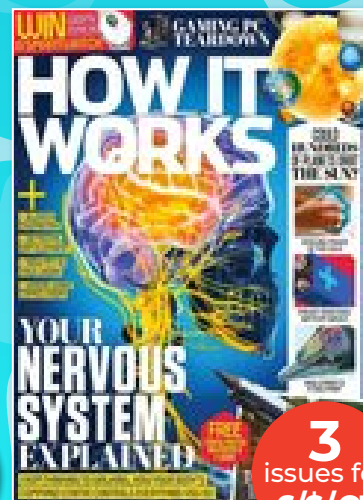
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BACK TO LIVE

528
8
"The hottest band in the world are going out with a hell of a bang."

Kiss



Megadeth



Iron Maiden





Airbourne



Blues Pills



Mastodon



Sepultura

Download Festival 2022

Donington Park, Castle Donington

Legends return, legends say goodbye and legends are made when the UK's loudest major festival returns.

FRIDAY

Three years since Download Festival last hosted its (usually) annual full-scale rock'n'roll blow-out and there's no small sense of triumph seeing 80,000-plus fans return to Donington Park. The sun is shining, and **Wayward Sons'** riffs blow on the wind as bodies press through the gates, adding an extra strut to the step that will surely be reduced to a hobble by the end of three days' celebration.

Under baking sun, the **Kris Barras Band** – frontman Barras must be at least 85 per cent tattoo – secure a raft of new fans, with the likes of blues-rock stomper *Hail Mary* hitting with conviction.

Myles Kennedy might have one of rock's finest voices, but it means little if his backing band are reduced to a tinny, indistinguishable garble by poor sound on the Opus Stage. Brief flickers of southern-inflected guitar twangs can be detected that suggest the promise of a good time, albeit in another time and another place.

A remixed *Imperial March* can mean only one thing. No one owns the sun-soaked mid-evening slot like Welsh ragga-rockers **Skindred**. There's a superbly daft energy about *Pressure* and *That's My Jam*, with their bouncy, jagged riffs, and frontman Benji Webbe conducts with his usual zeal. Are they a novelty band? To an extent. But they always top the fun stakes.

Whether going hell for leather on *Ready To Rock* and *Breakin' Outta Hell* or the leviathan stomp of *Back In The Game* and *Boneshaker*, **Airbourne** are just what the doctor ordered to get the blood pumping in the Opus Stage audience. "You're worth waiting two years for – you'd be worth waiting two million," vocalist Joel O'Keeffe says breathlessly, the huge grin on his face reflecting the sentiment.

"Let's have a moment of silence for all the other bands... who we just murdered."

Frank Carter & The Rattlesnakes might be cocksure, but that swagger is exactly why they headlined last year's *Pilot*. *Juggernaut*, *Devil Inside Me* and *Crowbar* are exhilarating, delivered with all the piss and vinegar a growing punk phenom needs, while the cover *Drain The Blood* pays respectful tribute to planned Opus headliners The Distillers.

Despite certain face-painted men taking over the Apex Stage, Swedish band **Blues Pills** pull an admirably large audience in the Dogtooth tent. Singer Elin Larsson is a real live wire, crowd surfing and pogoing around in equal measure. Her huge vocal range is well complemented with bluesy stabs and rollicking riffs. A particularly manic *Low Road* earns the loudest cheers.

Electric Wizard's headline set kicks off

with a squall of abyssal noise, the perfect antidote to the painted-up glitz of Kiss. This is ugly music with uglier lyrics, *Return Trip* and *Satanic Rites Of Dragula* so punishing it feels like we'll witness the heat-death of the universe before the end of a song, while psychedelic imagery flashing on screens behind the band enhances the overall apocalyptic effect. By the time the band get to closer *Funeralopolis*, the audience has descended into a bacchanal frenzy of colliding bodies and writhing flesh.

Meanwhile, there's all manner of explosions at the other end of the field. Main Stage headliners **Kiss** kick off their swansong UK performance with a pyro-charged *Detroit Rock City*. Presumably, the End Of The Road moniker was a reference to the band's impending retirement, and not fair warning that their gratuitous use of fire and flame is going to consume everyone present. *Lick It Up* gets a zesty airing before Gene Simmons shoves that tongue in poor Tommy Thayer's unsuspecting face. After all these years, Simmons's blood-soaked bass solo is still terrifying, while an awesome, swaggering *God Of Thunder* more than lives up to its hyperbolic title. Paul Stanley's squawks of "Hey, Download!" are somehow increasingly endearing. He flies across the field during a triumphant *Love Gun* – more a victory zip-wire than a victory lap. They will be missed, but the hottest band in the world are going out with a hell of a bang.

SATURDAY

The spooky crow caws and tolling bells don't quite have the intended effect on a glorious afternoon, but Welsh quintet **Those Damn Crows** impress with their muscular hard-rock hooks. *Who Did It* is a potent rocker, while *Send The Reaper* gets sore heads banging. Although likeable, singer Shane Greenhall sounds oddly American for a bloke from Bridgend.

During **Monster Truck's** set, rain falls for the first time all weekend, but it doesn't matter. Opening with *Don't Tell Me How To Live*, the Canadian band go down a storm with their bluesy, feelgood bluster. *Live Free* also chugs along nicely. The Truck have a mighty sound for a one-guitar band, and they're outrageously tight.

Everything seems to get a lot louder for **Black Label Society**. Zakk Wylde keeps audience interaction to a minimum, and earth-shaking metal at a maximum. A *Love Unreal* drenches the field with hulking riffs and blazing guitar solos, *Fire It Up's* main-riff crunch gets thousands of faces gurning.

It's testament to 2020's *The Kingdom* that **Bush's** new material feels vibrant and vital, but it's their older songs *Machinehead*, ➤

BACK TO LIVE

528
Download offers a once-in-a-lifetime invitation to watch history made.

Black Label Society



Massive Wagons



Deftones



Everything Zen and closer *Comedown* that generate the biggest buzz (a snippet of *Children Of The Grave* notwithstanding), rolling the clocks back to the glory days of plaid-clad rockers.

Shinedown struggle to follow, with their earnest, radio-ready hard rock. When they release the shackles, such as with *Devil And Enemies*, they can bang like the best of them, but today the set-list is all wrong. Schlocky ballads *Unity* and *Second Chance* soon disrupt any momentum the band had built up.

Mastodon have never really 'got' festivals, often sidestepping all discernible hits in favour of deep cuts and intricate instrumentals. Thankfully it works today, with *Pain With An Anchor*, *Megaladon* and *The Crux* all showing just why the band are so revered. There are even a couple of discernible singalongs, *Teardrinker*, *Black Tongue* and *Blood And Thunder* showing just how easily they can conjure massive festival anthems. Still no *Show Yourself* or *Curl Of The Burl* though, lads?

With recent events – a split with long-time bassist Sergio Vega, and founding guitarist Stephen Carpenter's decision not to tour – **Deftones'** first UK show in four years could have been a damp squib. But it's not. There's no lack of the Californians' spectacular,

doomy gloss, and they deliver genre-redefining bangers *Be Quiet And Drive* and *My Own Summer* with jaw-dropping nonchalance. When Chino Moreno isn't wrestling with his unnecessarily long microphone lead, he hurls himself around the stage, screaming almost to the point of combustion.

Short, if not necessarily sweet, suits **Napalm Death** just fine, and the West Midlandsers scorch their way through a 35-minute set in the Dogtooth tent. Thirty-five years after their debut album, the band's sound and message remains as potent as ever, and is summarised perfectly by closer *Nazi Punks Fuck Off*.

On the Opus Stage, **Megadeth** are a less chaotic affair, their pinpoint, neck-breaking thrash honed over several decades. Dave Mustaine and co. delve deep for a boisterous *Dread And The Fugitive Mind*, deeper still for black-magic-themed *The Conjuring*; Mustaine

didn't play it for years, owing to his Christianity. Introducing *Sweating Bullets*, he says: "This song's about my wife's crazy friend." Relatively recent, virtuoso additions Dirk Verbeuren (drums) and Kiko Loureiro (lead guitar) keep iconic songs such as *Peace Sells* fresh and fiery.

Sepultura frontman Derrick Green is a force of nature during his band's Dogtooth headline set. New(ish) songs *Means To An End* and *Capital Enslavement* show just how vital the band still are, but it's closer *Roots Bloody Roots* that generates a crowd roar worthy of the Main Stage.

This year is the seventh time **Iron Maiden** have headlined at Donington Park, and their spectacular opening involves Feudal Japanese architecture, a samurai Eddie and epic heavy metal riffs.

The Legacy Of The Beast Tour lives up to its name as Maiden explore a highlights reel of their career, with a somewhat plodding start giving way to a genuinely thrilling run-through of some of the greatest songs in the heavy metal canon: *Flight Of Icarus*, *Fear Of The Dark*, *The Number Of The Beast*, *The Trooper*. Delivering their set with the typical aplomb and bravado that has taken the band around the world many times, they assert themselves as exactly what Donington needed to remember its own rich legacy, closing number *Aces High* showing that few bands possess the ordinance to even scratch Maiden's heavy-metal supremacy.

Tremonti





Steel Panther



Biffy Clyro

SUNDAY

From singing about curries to covering snippets of Peter Andre and Bob Marley, **Massive Wagons** elicit broad smiles from start to finish. It doesn't hurt that the songs are so infectious; *Bangin' In Your Stereo*, *In It Together* and new song *Fuck The Haters* are all perfect party starters.

There have been loads of Alter Bridge T-shirts on display all weekend, and plenty of wearers congregate at the Opus Stage for **Tremonti**. *If Not For You* sounds enormous with its cinematic samples, as do *A Dying Machine's* beefy riffs. Mark Tremonti's guitar-god status is common knowledge, but these days he's an accomplished singer as well.

Almost like a house band, there are no surprises from Danish rockabilly metallers **Volbeat**. Still, they're hugely enjoyable. "You look happy!" remarks frontman Michael Poulsen. The heavy *Shotgun Blues* is exactly what it says on the tin, while Rob Caggiano's electrifying, immaculately performed guitar solos light up *Seal The Deal*.

Korn's Jonathan Davis is clearly in high spirits, and that reflects well on the band's set. They entertain a packed audience that could make some headliners jealous, treating them to just about every hit a Korn fan could want, including a bagpipe-enhanced *Shoots And Ladders*, profanity-laden *Y'all Want A Single*, and a colossal *Coming Undone* complete with a *We Will Rock You* snippet. Korn remind everyone how they became nu-metal superstars in the first place.



Korn

"Regard!" **The Darkness's** Justin Hawkins shouts. He introduces *Stuck In A Rut* as "the greatest riff in the band's history". It's up there. Now into their third decade, the Lowestoft legends are creeping towards 'classic band' territory. Whether it's the way deadpan bassist Frankie Poullain plays the cowbell on *One Way Ticket* like his life depends on it, or Hawkins's ankle-clapping headstand on *Get Your Hands Off My Woman*, their live-show quirks are becoming the stuff of legend. They close with *Christmas Time* (really), and the buggers only go and pull it off.

The Avalanche tent is woefully empty for punk legends **Descendents**. Not that the band care. Their lightning brand of hardcore punk shaped everyone from The Offspring to Green Day and is still as potent now. *Everything Sux* gets things off to a blistering start, and the band give Napalm Death a run for hyperactive sub-minute blasts of noise. Anthems *Hope, I'm The One* and *Suburban Home* assert their status.

Following them, **Steel Panther** are an entirely different proposition in 2022. Their X-rated, glam-metal-spoof shtick isn't aging well, but the self-deprecating exchanges between singer Michael Starr and guitarist Satchel are genuinely funny, and the latter is undeniably a blinding player. Tens of thousands still remember every word to 2009's *Community Property* – the band's ode to infidelity – and a field-wide singalong to *Weenie Ride* (with at least two blow-up dolls floating around) is certainly a sight, but the standout

performer is the British Sign Language interpreter. It's either the best or worst night of their career. What's the sign for 'gloryhole' again?

"Scream for us, Donington!" No, Iron Maiden aren't on again, **Biffy Clyro** frontman Simon Neil is drawing the line before admitting he's "always wanted to ask that". Biffy's audience don't need much encouragement when the band are on such phenomenal form. Pyro, kaleidoscopic visuals, acoustic numbers with violins... Biffy have it all, delivering a master class in what it takes to become a Download headliner. *Mountains, Bubbles* and *Cop Syrup* are as huge as anything from Maiden or Kiss. Biffy's set is a reminder that Donington's capability for crowning new legends remains its most magical element: a once-in-a-lifetime invitation to watch history made in the flesh.

Words: **Rich Hobson & Chris Lord**
Photos: **Kevin Nixon & Katja Ogrin**



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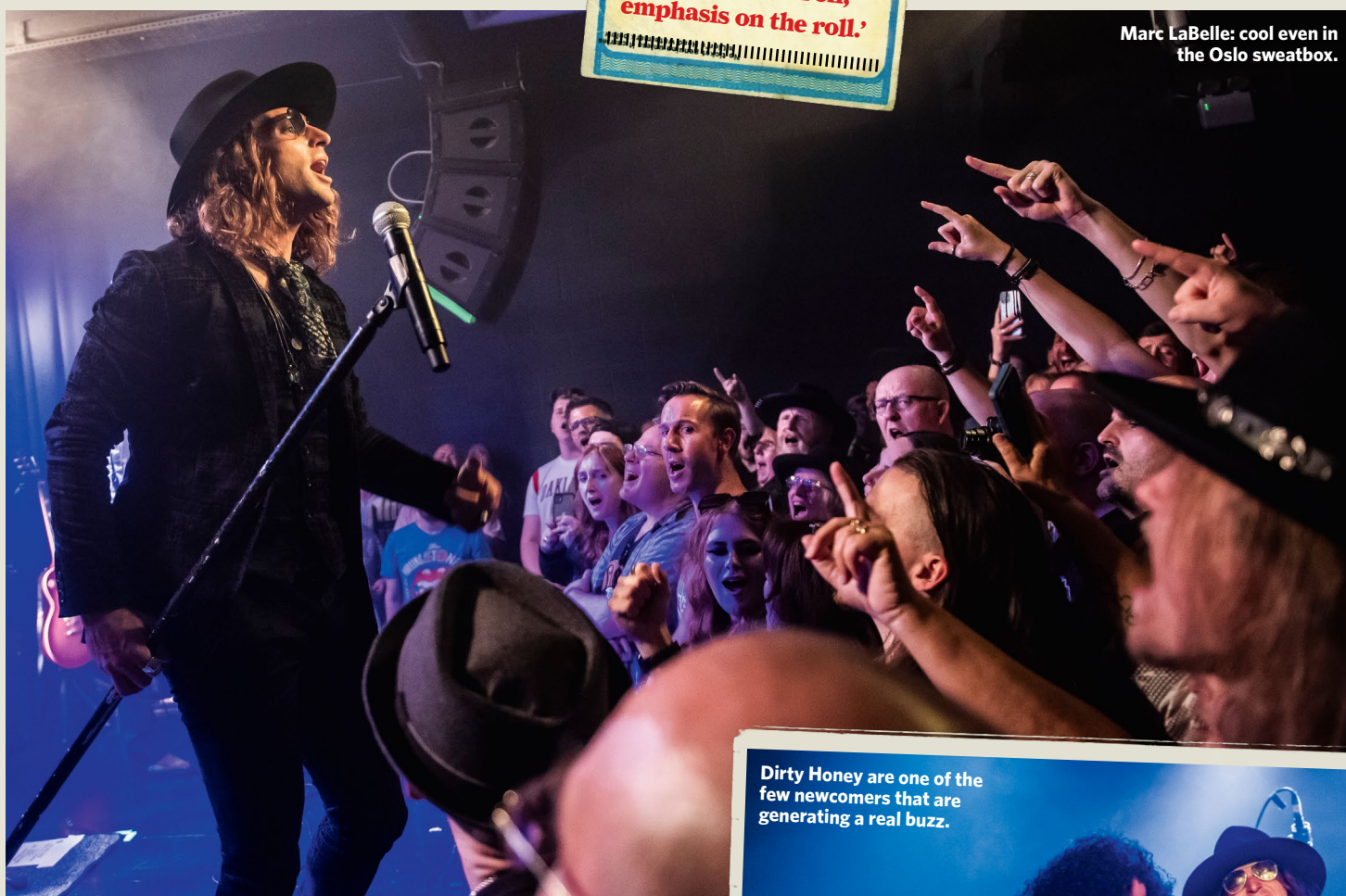
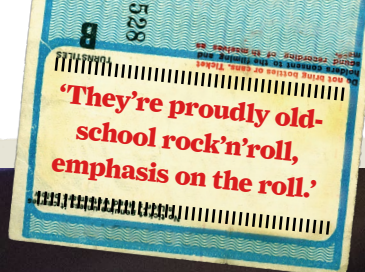
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Marc LaBelle: cool even in the Oslo sweatbox.

Dirty Honey

London Hackney Oslo

California's hotly tipped classic rock'n'rollers bring a dose of the Sunset Strip to East London.

★ It's a mid-heatwave Tuesday. Streets of beer gardens glitter outside, but here we are, sweating waterfalls in a windowless black box, assuring ourselves that we've definitely made the right choice. Tonight's gig has oversold and you can feel the extra bodies. Cooling beers are passed above young and older heads. Dirty Honey T-shirts mingle with other rock tour tees and a scattering of stylish hats, most of which remain jammed on despite the heat. Slash would be proud.

This is Dirty Honey's first time in London, and their second UK headline gig (the first was in Glasgow a few days ago, followed by a morning Download set that pulled in thousands). Over the coming weeks they'll play across the UK and Europe, flitting between support slots with Guns N' Roses, Kiss and Rival Sons. In other words, a ton of stadiums, arenas and big theatres. It's all very in keeping with the A-list gigs they've been bagging in their relatively short lifespan – The Who, Slash, Alter Bridge and The Black Crowes are among previous stage buddies. All that, and they're still unsigned.

Right now, though, they're in this East London dive ready to kick some arse. "We're perfectly at home at a sweaty little rock club in the middle of a city. That's what we did for many years," singer Marc LaBelle says with a smile. "So it's kinda like coming home. It's exciting, especially somewhere like here where we feel like we have something to prove."

Backstage pre-show it's all coffee cups, tuning guitars and hanging out with their road crew of three. LaBelle's best friend is their merch guy. They're an easy-going bunch, with that relatively rare ability to act like rock stars without being jerks.

It's a manner that transfers to the stage, where the thick grooves of opener *California Dreamin'* seem to swagger through bourbon-spiked treacle, without a shred of nerve-induced acceleration; proudly old-school rock'n'roll, emphasis on the roll, with a fresh set of teeth.

The band slip into it all like a pair of silk gloves, dressed in the sort of Rolling Stones-via-Black Crowes wardrobe that's been adopted by everyone from Blackberry Smoke to Rival Sons. *Almost* too-cool-for-school, were it not for the sense of fun that bounces through their set. And they relish the intimacy; they've done the business in stadiums, LaBelle has hung out backstage with Axl ("He was very sweet"), but this sort of sweatbox setting is what built Dirty Honey. Cool as cucumbers in aviators, but unbothered? Oh no.

"We like the rock'n'roll in London, don't we?" LaBelle says with a grin, to affirmative roars, before sliding into the deliciously nasty, Guns-y *Take My Hand*. The heat thickens. By the time they reach

Dirty Honey are one of the few newcomers that are generating a real buzz.



a feelgood Gypsy it's so hot you can see LaBelle's hair curling, Hasidic-style, under his hat, while bassist Justin Smolian's already Slash-esque mop has grown into a giant cloud on top of his head.

With such strong tunes, the pre-encore bass, drum and guitar solos feel unnecessary (or at least a bit much in one go); a *little* too much like dick-measuring, laying on skilled chops that already come across quite happily through their songs.

"I feel like rock'n'roll bands are few and far between these days," LaBelle says earlier. "Like I noticed at Download there was a lot of hard rock and metal and not a lot of that blues-based rock like Zeppelin, the Stones and AC/DC."

To be fair, there are newcomers shooting for those particular stars. Dirty Honey are one of the few that are generating a real buzz, as reflected by the singalongs that flow with almost every song tonight. They bring it home with *Rolling 7s*. An encore of Aerosmith's *Last Child* is fun because it's a great song, but they don't need it – and that says a lot.

Polly Glass

BACK TO LIVE

Eagles

Liverpool Anfield Stadium

Hits, hits, hits...

★ In the middle of a blazing Indian summer for mega-shows by old-timers like the Stones, Paul McCartney and Diana Ross, spunky young contenders the Eagles bring evergreen blow-dried soft-rock mellowness to Liverpool. At this fairly spare stadium show, spry 74-year-old Don Henley promises "no wind machines, no fireworks, no butt-wiggling choreography," he quips. "Just a bunch of guys with guitars."

Maybe so, but what sweetly melodious guys, with their radiant guitar-jangling and sublimely blended harmonies. Part of the band's ever-expanding vocal chorus since Glenn Frey died in 2016, country singer Vince Gill is a strong presence, lending extra Nashville twang to *Take It To The Limit*, *Lyin' Eyes*, *Tequila Sunrise* and more. In a pleasant surprise, Frey's son Deacon rejoins the band mid-show following an extended sabbatical, taking the lead on *Peaceful Easy Feeling*, *Take It Easy* and others.

The set list is agreeably egalitarian, with post-Eagles solo songs nestled alongside greatest hits. Joe Walsh rasps a wobbly rendition of his hedonistic confessional *Life's Been Good*, Henley sets Anfield ablaze with his roaringly nostalgic *The Boys Of Summer*. Striking up the immortal *Hotel California*, these veteran soft-rock legends hint that his tour could be their last. But after half a century of retirements and comebacks, they are clearly not sailing into the sunset any time soon.

Stephen Dalton



Jon Spencer & The HITmakers

London Hackney Oslo

Punk'n'roll turns up the heat on the hottest night of the year so far.

★ Although his blues are well and truly exploded, Jon Spencer remains on his ongoing quest as a torchbearer for punk-rock blues garnished with a healthy side order of no-wave noise. And while this is to be applauded, there nonetheless remains the nagging sense that Spencer and his HITmakers are taking longer to bed in than was planned for.

There's a lingering suspicion that the constant change in drummers is preventing the band from reaching its full live potential. With M Sord and Janet Weiss gone, man about town Andy Zammit is now keeping the drum stool warm. With Spencer locking eyes with the drummer and counting him in before each song, the pace feels that little bit slow with spontaneity still a destination in the horizon.

But there's still much to enjoy. Bob Bert – formerly of Spencer's alma mater, Pussy Galore, as well as Sonic Youth – is clearly enjoying himself augmenting the sound with his trash percussion, while Sam Coomes's keyboards weave in an out of the maelstrom emanating from the stage.

At the centre of it all is Jon Spencer, who wails and flails his guitar with no mercy. *Death Ray* and *Trash Can* are fine examples of the band's lo-fi aesthetic, and one can only marvel at his unhinged antics in such sweltering conditions.

Julian Marszalek

Bonham-Bullick Band

Chichester Chidham Hall

Top-flight blues slingers get up close and personal and deliver in style.

★ They're no strangers to entertaining crowds of thousands at international blues festivals when they're not backing Paul Rodgers live, so catching the Bonham-Bullick Band in a small sold-out venue – on this occasion as part of the local WemsFest – is an opportunity too good to miss.

They kick off with *See You Again* followed by *I Had A Dream*, and unsurprisingly a good chunk of the evening's set is songs from the band's new *Bonham-Bullick* covers album, with *Can't You See What You're Doing To Me*, *What Did I Do Wrong* and the monumentally dark and atmospheric *Bleeding Muddy Water* nestled among a selection of originals, including *Feel So Alive* and *Take Me Down*. Deborah Bonham's voice sounds smooth and powerful from the off, while guitarist Peter Bullick is on slick and playful form, injecting a touch of Led Zep's *In My Time Of Dying* into the end of *Fly* and a few bars of Quo's *Caroline* into *Devil's In New Orleans* (presumably because Quo bassist Rhino Edwards is spotted in the audience). Cracking rockers *Grace*, *Jack Past 8* and the sweeping *No Angel* bring the main set to a close, then the band return for a nod to Rodgers with blues classic *The Hunter* and a wild blast through Zep's *Rock And Roll*.

Top notch blues rock in an intimate venue – pretty much perfect.

Essi Berelian

Church Of The Cosmic Skull

London 229 Club

White-clad cultists take their gospel to W1.

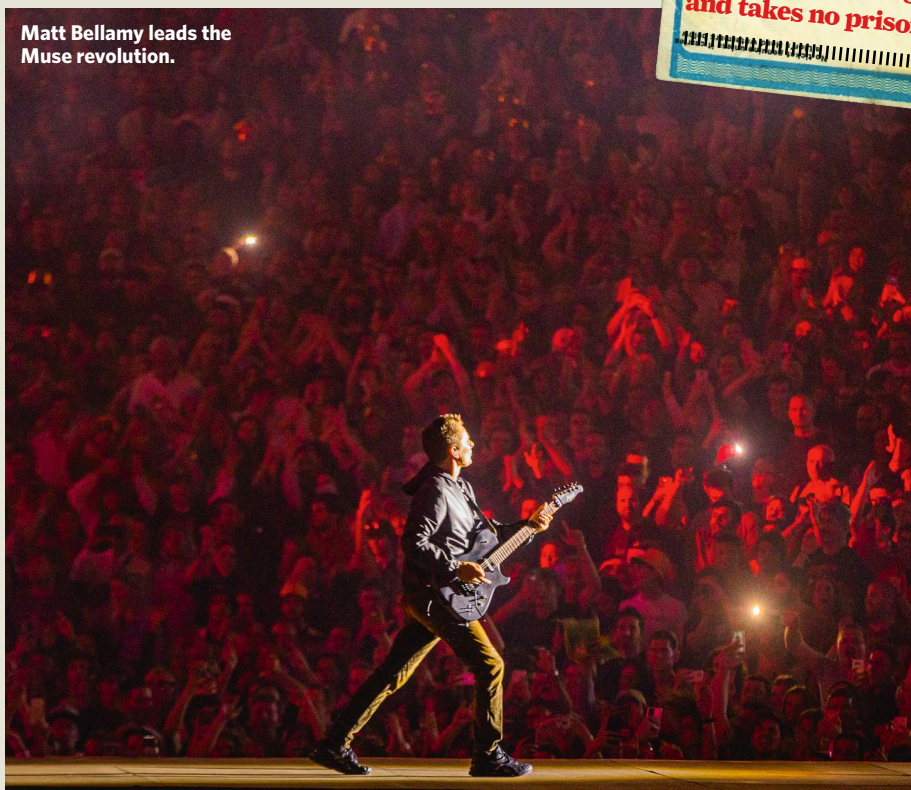
★ As strange as it might seem, in these dark and straitened times, a small-scale cult in matching white outfits might just be the thing that saves us. Redemption comes in many guises, but who knew that a band whose latest album is titled *Everybody's Going To Die* and come clattering out of the gates looking like a budget hybrid of ABBA-meets-Mastodon could be the answer to our prayers?

Part church service, part bearded wig-out, Church Of The Cosmic Skull are as spirited as they are adept. They may play it for laughs, but there's no denying the technical and vocal wizardry that goes into their performance. With a production replete with video screens and an all-white-all-the-time aesthetic, Church Of The Cosmic Skull are a shimmering vision of goodness, like a peyote fever dream or the kind of mirage a lost man might stumble across in the Saharan wilderness.

Especially good is the swaying mantra of *Watch It Grow*, given extra swish by the two (very nearly) synchronised backing singers, and the spangled, wide-eyed *Seven Rays Of Colour*, although it's the oddly uplifting *Everybody's Going To Die* that has the whole audience moving with evangelical zeal to its undulating groove, hips swaying, hands reaching towards the light, happily indoctrinated and on their way to the higher ground.

Philip Wilding

Matt Bellamy leads the Muse revolution.



'The Muse revolt kicks down the palace gates and takes no prisoners.'

Chris Wolstenholme and co. deliver a set peppered with jams on AC/DC, RATM and Hendrix riffs.



Muse

Lisbon Rock In Rio

Muse headline the return of one of the world's great festivals with a show that's musically powerful and visually spectacular.

★ After many years of uncoded warning, the uprising finally begins. In a decadent City Of The Future – the travelling Rock In Rio festival, one of the world's god-tier fests returning to Lisbon after four years, with its exotic boulevards of local music, a fine-dining Chef's Garden, videogame emporiums, rooftop bars and swimming pools overlooking the second stage – the statues of an old world order are torn down on big screens set into a gigantic sci-fi feature wall. To chants of "The will of the people!" the three leaders of the space-rock revolt, in hooded cowls and mirrored masks, take the stage to chords of strident glam rock, and lay out their manifesto and battle plan. 'Let's push the emperors into the ocean,' sings chief antagonist Matt Bellamy. 'We'll smash your institutions to pieces.' *Will Of The People* swiftly exposes its hand as a satire on Trumpian populism and a condemnation of the 2021 Capitol attack – 'With every second our anger increases, we're gonna smash a nation to pieces,' Bellamy continues – but Muse's explosive entrance to Rock In Rio 2022 certainly makes for bold and historic stuff.

Until now, day one of this two-weekend mega-fest has played out entirely on-script. Liam Gallagher delivers an unbalanced set, pushing his solo material far too hard on a festival crowd who've turned up early and get a bare smattering of Oasis hits. The National

cement their role as the millennial R.E.M. with an hour of scintillating piano-led mood tunes and fantastic art-rock anthems like *Buzzblood Ohio* and *Mr November*, singer Matt Berninger occasionally distracted from his intense mutterings by the 'angels' zip-lining across the front of the main stage.

But when Muse storm the stage, having comprehensively shed the 80s-retro-futurist feel of 2018's *Simulation Theory* album and with a timely new slogan – "We need a revolution, so long as we stay free" – it feels like the kick-start on post-pandemic rock. With flame flumes exploding across the stage like we're on the front line of the fight-back, Muse's new, state-of-the-world material reflects the precipitous condition of humanity in 2022, its fear, paranoia and dislocation proving fuel for authoritarianism and its democracies crumbling at the thumb-clicks of liars and frauds. The synth-pop *Compliance* attacks the culture and tactics of online thought police, while *Kill Or Be Killed*, an old-school Muse scorch-rock in the vein of *Stockholm Syndrome* – seems driven by the many manias of isolation. As the world looks more and more like a Muse song, Muse, combining their hardcore crunch with synthetic pop textures more skilfully with each passing album, sound ever more vital.



Rock In Rio's carbon footprint goes up in smoke.

There's time left before civilisation's collapse for larks, though. Between new songs, Muse make up for the relative lack of pizzazz (no robotic dance troupes, inflatable drones or flaming symbols of the futurist revolution tonight, although the giant inflatable zombie from their *Simulation Theory* tour makes a guest appearance) with an incredible stream of hits. Intergalactic pop (*Starlight*, *Pressure*, the none-more-Queen *Madness*), corroded glam (*Uprising*, *Psycho*) and stampeding space-rock (*Plug In Baby*, *Time Is Running Out*, *Knights Of Cydonia*) combine in a 90-minute powerhouse of a set, peppered with jams on AC/DC, Rage Against The Machine and Hendrix riffs. Bellamy demolishes his amp with his guitar amid the opera-metal mayhem of *Stockholm Syndrome*, and plays *Behold, The Glove* on the touch-pad wristwatch of a huge mechanical glove that looks like something an alien ogre might punch Superman into space with.

In such opulent surroundings as Rock In Rio, the Muse revolt kicks down the palace gates and takes no prisoners. Their time is now.

Mark Beaumont

BACK TO LIVE



Guns N' Roses (with Carrie Underwood): a shortened set of ups and downs.

Guns N' Roses, Gary Clark Jr., Michael Monroe

London Tottenham Hotspur Stadium

While the supports burn bright, the headliners are a shadow of their former incendiary selves.

★ In what seems like a scant few minutes, Michael Monroe has traversed their sliver of the Spurs stage he and his band been allotted by the headliners, skipped past guitarist Steve Conte and climbed the side stage rigging before belting out the ever-effervescent '78. Monroe and his band have 30 minutes and eight songs (more than the previous day, when logistics kept them off the stage completely) to stun an audience who have ambled in from the bar to see what the racket is.

And what a racket. A breathless half hour of raw, bloody-fingered rock'n'roll: *Last Train To Tokyo*, *Ballad Of The Lower East Side*, a thunderous take on Hanoi Rocks' *Malibu Beach Nightmare*, and then one final, defiant call to arms with *Dead, Jail or Rock 'n' Roll* – the video for which, lest we forget, featured one impossibly young-looking Axl Rose. How the world has turned.

Gary Clark Jr. strolls on to the stage with the assuredness of a man blessed with the guitar chops of a young Stevie Ray Vaughan and the effortless cool of *Let Love Rule*-era Lenny Kravitz. It doesn't seem to bother him though; his greatness sits lightly on his shoulders. Dressed like he's just come from a GQ photo-shoot, he wears a fedora in a way that makes you think, mistakenly, that perhaps you should get one of those.

Clark Jr. has time for two songs fewer than Monroe, but that's because his approach is a whole lot looser, and he knows how to make the spaces sing. That said, he and his band come out of the traps at a clip with the thrilling bounce of the Stax-sounding *Ain't Messin' Round*, his guitar solo making grown men drop plastic pint pots of cider, and sticks with his much lauded *Blak And Blu* album for the low, grinding *Bright Lights*. But it's the driven jive of *Gotta Get Into Something* that eventually levels the place.

Something is wrong in the house of Axl. Not the DIY haircut or the pantomime boots, but he seems genuinely aggrieved at his inability to hit the right notes tonight. After the elongated *Estranged* he announces that he's going to change the set-list. Which in practice means it's going to be truncated. So within the short space of time from their Dublin show four days ago, the set has been reduced from almost three hours to two and a half, and tonight to just a little over two.

Which seems odd when only moments earlier he was hitting notes on *Welcome To The Jungle* that only a dog might hear. The evening's unevenness is indicative of a show that swings from maddening lows to dizzying highs. Case in point: *Civil War* is very good indeed, but then crashes into a cover of *Wichita Lineman* that is so truly and utterly awful it's like

watching a pensioner being mugged and being unable to do anything about it.

Guns N' Roses aren't a gang any more, let alone the most dangerous band in the world. There seems to be little bonhomie in the band; Duff, Slash and Axl rarely acknowledge each other, and when they work their way through Velvet Revolver's *Slither* you can only wonder at the hours of off-stage negotiation that might have taken. That said, Duff makes a decent fist of The Stooges' *I Wanna Be Your Dog*, but then the band let the air out of their tyres with a strangely and deliberately leaden take on *You're Crazy*, which is like putting a wheel clamp on a Bugatti.

Country superstar Carrie Underwood, one of Axl's biggest fans – which is a matter of record and not just a throwaway line delivered from the stage – joins the band to encore on *Sweet Child O' Mine* and *Paradise City*, her performance on the former spurring the usually recalcitrant Rose to admit that Carrie was "saving my ass".

Which is Guns N' Roses distilled tonight: a once great band falling over their own feet. Clouds open over the stadium as *November Rain* is dropped quietly from the set as GN'R and their audience dream of better days.

Philip Wilding

HOPE AND HOMES FOR CHILDREN



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**'This jaw-dropping
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**The band's infamous
penis cannon is the
show's, erm, climax.**



Rammstein

Coventry Building Society Arena

With an eye-popping stage show the band hit a new career peak.

★ Back in the UK after a covid-enforced two-year delay, Rammstein complete the unfinished business of their biggest tour to date with this rescheduled stadium show, this time with emotionally charged material from their new lockdown-inspired album *Zeit* swelling an updated set-list.

Dark times may produce serious music, but these bombastic Berliners do sombre introspection in their own uniquely maximalist way. They arrive in Coventry wearing Wagnerian superhero costumes – ghostly monk, disco sex robot, Viking warlord etc – like a magnificent porno-metal version of the Village People. Let the flame-grilled, ear-buggering disco-rock carnage begin.

Featuring a visually stunning flame-spurting, sky-scraping cyberpunk cityscape stage set that reportedly cost six million pounds, this spectacular show elevates Rammstein into the big-production superleague, its blockbuster scale and high-tech production rivalling U2, Metallica or latter-day Stones tours. Musically the band are at their most populist, balancing their signature industrial metal ear-shredders with nods to classical music, Europop and techno. Stirring romanticism and synth-rock melody feature more prominently than ever, particularly on the melancholia-tinged turbo-chansons from *Zeit* including *Armee der Tristan*, *Adieu* and *Zeit* itself. Of course, between ruminative ballads there are clobbering riff-monster classics like *Du Hast*, the rebooted Brechtian marching song *Links 2-3-4* and

a particularly brutal *Mein Herz Brennt*, all heavily augmented with weapons-grade pyrotechnics and thunderous explosions that rattle windows 11 miles away, according to local news reports. Rammstein clearly grasp that musical and visual variety is key to keeping a stadium-sized show exciting. There's even a mighty EDM remix of *Deutschland*, which blows up the band's electro-disco undercurrents to superclub rave-anthem dimensions. Fantastic.

Rammstein's theatrical staging is legendary, but they surpass themselves with this stadium-sized carnival, arguably their most fully realised Gesamtkunstwerk to date. Familiar stunts from previous tours have been reinstated, but even their greatest hits still pack a powerful punch, especially when amplified into darkly comic performance art. Herman Munster-ish singer Till Lindemann's cartoon-villain attempts to boil keyboard player Christian 'Flake' Lorenz alive inside a huge cauldron during *Mein Teil* is pure pantomime, but with a sinister edge of Big Bad Wolf fairy-tale. And *Puppe* features a hideous mutant baby in a giant silver pram, which Lindemann then sets ablaze, creating an apocalyptic horror movie effect when the 'baby' vomits torrents of black confetti on to the audience. *Eraserhead* meets *The Exorcist*.

There are fresh tweaks to the band's absurdist avant-cabaret slapstick too. After performing a pared-down chamber-pop version of *Engel* on the secondary stage, backed by their inspired choice of support act,



**"It ain't half hot, mum..."
Till Lindemann turns
up the heat.**

French female concert piano players Duo Abélard, Rammstein crowd-surf back to the main stage in rubber dinghies, over the cheering audience. Pure genius. Most welcome of all, of course, is the return of the band's infamous penis cannon, a classic prop revived in more engorged form for this show's, erm, climax. During hard-core sex-metal orgy *Pussy*, a joyfully leering Lindemann straddles the beast, which blasts oceans of foam into the audience while a massive white jizzard fills the stadium sky.

There are very few chinks in Rammstein's armour in this superbly staged, carefully paced stadium orgy. Maybe just a couple of clunky changes between songs, mainly in the expanded encore section. Also, alas, there is no simulated sodomy between Lindemann and Lorenz, an old shock-rock stunt that almost got them arrested in Russia – a badge of honour for any band, but especially so given Putin's brutal invasion of Ukraine. Any disco-metal supergroup that annoys homophobic fascists is clearly doing something right. Minor niggles aside, however this jaw-dropping mega-show is pretty near perfect. A new career peak for Rammstein at their filthy, funny, flame-belching, crowd-surfing, cock-spurting, stadium-fisting best.

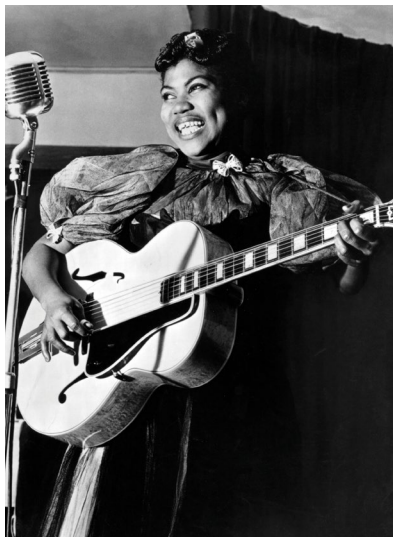
Stephen Dalton



The Soundtrack Of My Life

Genre-hopping blueser
Fantastic Negrito on the records, artists and gigs that are of lasting significance to him.

Interview: Emma Johnston



“Sister Rosetta Tharpe, this church lady, is bringing the fire. She’s an architect.”

Fantastic Negrito, aka Xavier Dphrepaulezz, has spent a career documenting his extraordinary life. His new album, *White Jesus Black Problems*, tells the newly discovered story of his seven-times great-grandparents, an African slave and a Scottish servant who fell in love in Virginia, risked the brutality of the era to be together, and raised a family of free children. “It makes me feel very positive, very upbeat,” he says, “and I really want to tell their story.”

THE FIRST MUSIC I REMEMBER HEARING

Pumpkin, Banana, Peas & Corn by Frankie ‘Zhivago’ Young and the Village Rams. He was this artist my dad listened to. It’s so goofy. Also Louis Armstrong, classical music. An Egyptian singer called Umm Kulthum. A lot of stuff that sounded like Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan, that very eclectic, wild jazz. Harry Belafonte. My dad was a control freak. He’d control the music, control the narrative, control how you dress, so I didn’t really get popular music at all. I found that out later.

THE FIRST MUSIC I DISCOVERED FOR MYSELF

Our family lost our home, it burned down. We were in rural New England, Massachusetts. We lived on this farm for a while, and I’m down in this recreational room and I’m just looking around. I’m a kid, eleven maybe. I find these records, I put one on, and it was like: “Oh my god, this music!” I look at the label and it’s *Led Zeppelin II*. You imagine a kid who has been sheltered and has heard all this very specific music. I remember looking around, I felt like I was committing a crime. It was earth-shattering. I wasn’t a musician, but that take on the blues was so out-there.

THE FIRST SONG I PERFORMED LIVE

I started playing music late. I was in a pretty rough neighbourhood that had a lot of drug deaths and people, literally kids my age, were getting killed. So I decided that I wanted to play music. I used to sneak into the university and pretend I was a student, and I’d practice on all their musical equipment. That’s how I learned. I was writing a lot of my own stuff. I do remember I played some R&B: *Lean On Me*, *Ain’t No Sunshine*, the classics.

THE SONGWRITER

I gotta give it to Robert Johnson. Just for context of writing songs. How important are these songs? Who will they influence? Will we still be listening to these songs from the 1920s? Robert Johnson’s the winner in my book.

THE GUITAR HERO

Sister Rosetta Tharpe, because you just don’t see her coming. This church lady is bringing the fire. She’s an architect. And everything that people are going to

learn – Chuck Berry, everybody – is based on Sister Rosetta Tharpe and her amazing contribution to popular music. I like the people that built it. What she was doing at that time, and with that confidence and grace and power.

THE SINGER

My favourite singer is probably Prince, because of the range. He could rock, he could funk, he could ballad, he could do it all. I think he stole everything he knew from Sly Stone. Then we’ve got to throw Freddie Mercury in. I can’t choose one!

THE GREATEST ALBUM OF ALL TIME

The Robert Johnson Collection. It’s nothing but a guy with a guitar, but there is so much in it. There’s so much depth, so much knowledge. Here’s a guy a generation removed from slavery, telling his story. It’s very powerful to me. He’s a gangster rapper. He’s a rock’n’roller. He’s living on the edge. He’s punk. He’s the first of the twenty-seven club. He’s everything that we see now.

THE ALBUM THAT GETS ME THROUGH HARD TIMES

Nevermind by Nirvana. I love that album so much. It’s a blues album. It’s so honest and raw. This person is pleading with you, this guy’s suffering. It’s so therapeutic because it’s cathartic.

THE BEST LIVE ALBUM

This is easy: *Donny Hathaway Live*. You want to get together with your partner and get some sparks? *Donny Hathaway Live*. It’s just beautiful, man. He just seems so much better than the rest of us. Classic soul, it’s unbelievable. Make a hot cup of tea, put on the candles, take a bath, call up your buddy and listen to *Donny Hathaway Live*. He sings *Jealous Guy* better than John Lennon. I know that’s sacrilege. He sings *What’s Going On* – I’m sorry, people – better than Marvin Gaye. There it is, I said it.

THE BEST RECORD I MADE

White Jesus Black Problems. It’s the most free album I’ve ever done. I went in and I didn’t care. And I was telling someone else’s story, it’s not really my story. They took all the punches, all the consequences.

THE BEST COVER VERSION

When The Levee Breaks, Led Zeppelin. I have to give it to Led Zeppelin. These guys did their homework. They got that feeling of the song lyrically, like: “Oh, man, something really bad is gonna happen.” It’s beautiful.

MY SATURDAY NIGHT/PARTY SONG

It would have to be *Zombie* by Fela Kuti. Amazing.

THE SONG I WANT PLAYED AT MY FUNERAL

Happy Birthday. Because it’s an act of gratitude. I was very happy to have been born and to have taken this journey with all of you, and thank you. Happy birthday. Now I’m out. 🍌

White Jesus Black Problems is out now via Storefront Records.



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